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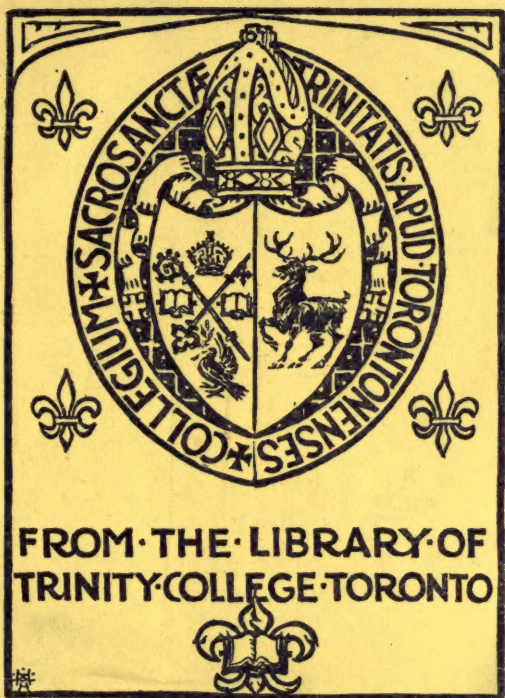
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THE BEQUEST OF
EDWARD KAYE KENDALL,
*Clerk in Holy Orders, M. A., D. C. L., formerly Professor in
this University.*

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THE SEASONS OF THE CHURCH

WHAT THEY TEACH

A SERIES OF SERMONS

ON THE DIFFERENT TIMES AND OCCASIONS

OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

THE SEASONS OF THE CHURCH

EDITED BY THE REV. J. H. MOORE

OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, AND OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

AND OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

LONDON

J. AND C. MOORE, 1, PATERNOSTER ROW

PRINTED AND SOLD BY THE AUTHOR

J. H. MOORE, 1, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

THE SEASONS OF THE CHURCH, WHAT THEY TEACH.

A SERIES OF SERMONS
ON THE DIFFERENT TIMES AND OCCASIONS
OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

EDITED BY THE REV. HENRY NEWLAND,
RECTOR OF WESTBOURNE; VICAR OF ST. MARY CHURCH, DEVON;
AND CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF EXETER.

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INTRODUCTORY SERMON TO THE SUNDAYS AFTER TRINITY.

WORKS DO SPRING OUT NECESSARILY OF A
TRUE AND LIVELY FAITH.

Isaiah, xlv. 15.

*“Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O
God of Israel, the Saviour.”*

If you ask a child in the school how he has obtained his knowledge of God, his ready answer will be, “From the Bible.” You remind him, however, that the Bible is a large book, that he himself is an indifferent scholar, who has not even read one hundredth part of it, nor understood a hundredth part of what he has read. You say that it is quite true that all that is known of God may be found in the Bible, but you doubt very much whether *he* has found it there himself.

You then repeat your question. The child, led to think for himself, and not to answer in common-places, will now probably remember

that all that he has learnt of God he has learnt from the Catechism, and from the answers and explanations of those whom God has authorised to teach him—his father and mother—the parson, or the parson's deputy and substitute, the schoolmaster.

That is to say, he has learnt it from the Church, from the lips of those lay and clerical members of it whom God has appointed to be its representatives to him.

You narrow the question still farther. If he has learnt concerning God from that authorised formulary of his own Church, the Catechism, from what part of it has he learnt it especially?

This will draw his attention to the Apostles' Creed, which really is the main doctrine of the Bible, arranged so that it may be easily committed to memory.

And, lastly, the question, "What dost thou *chiefly* learn in these articles of thy belief?" reduces the doctrine to this form:—

First, a belief in God the Father, Who hath made us and all the world.

Secondly, a belief in God the Son, Who hath redeemed us and all mankind.

Thirdly, a belief in God the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifieth us and all the elect people of God.

That is, a belief in the Trinity abstractedly, that God is three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and a belief in the Trinity relatively to ourselves, the several offices *in relation to us*, performed by the three Persons of that Godhead, the Maker, the Redeemer, the Preserver.

But this is the doctrine of Trinity Sunday, which sums up all that has been said at large by the Church ever since Advent, just as this recapitulation of the Creed sums up all that has been said in the Bible. It is the heading of the doctrines given by God to that Church, into which every one who has been admitted at all must have been admitted in the Name of the *Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*.

This, therefore, is the sum of our Faith, all that we have been considering from Advent up to Trinity Sunday. We will first recapitulate this, and then show how intimately it is connected with the sum of our duty, which we are about to consider from the first Sunday after Trinity to the end of the spiritual year.

First, we will recapitulate that which has been taught us already.

You have understood that which has hitherto been explained from Advent Sunday to this time; you can conceive that, we having lost our inheritance, and the Lord having promised

to regain it for us, He was expected upon earth in Advent. It is hard to understand how the Almighty God could vouchsafe so far to put off the Godhead as to be born at Christmas time of a pure virgin—but you are told so—you can believe it, and with thankfulness you lay it to heart.

That the Lord should be manifested to the world, that He should set His followers an example of what a perfect man was in this world of sin and shame is easy to understand, if we have taken in the doctrines of Christmas. If the Lord God was born into the world, and became man *at all*, it could not fail but that He would be manifest to the wide world of the Gentiles, and that He would be Perfect Man as He was Perfect God.

That He suffered for our sins we can imagine; when we know how it is that this wicked world is in the habit of treating those who have done it most good, we can hardly think it would be otherwise with Him Who has done us most good of all. When we know, from ancient history, that man rebelled against God in Heaven, we can hardly suppose that he would not rebel against God in earth.

But can God die? It is hard to conceive it, but not harder than to conceive that God should be born. In putting on the Manhood,

such as we had made it, He put on all the weaknesses and all the ills that we had brought upon it. It was not the Image of God in which man was first created that He put on, but the image of man, such as Adam begat after his fall; and if Adam brought death into the world, then must the Lord God put on death, as well as other ills, when He put on Adam's image.

All the rest is easy to conceive. If the Lord God made Himself subject to death, it was, as St. Peter says, "impossible that He should be holden of it." If He did pass through the shame and humiliation of Good Friday, He could not but burst open the grave that held Him on Easter Day. If He had come down from Heaven for the Advent of Christmas, He could not but return there when His victory was complete, on Ascension Day. If He had joined the Manhood to Himself at all, then the Manhood, together with the Godhead, must be now in Heaven, preparing for the Advent of the last great day.

Nor are the Whitsuntide doctrines difficult to comprehend; we feel them with our hearts rather than understand them with our minds; we have seen God among us, and we see every day how far we are from being what He is, and what we must be if we would stand in the

presence of "One Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." For a time we were supported by His visible presence, and we have it now no longer. What are we to do? We feel that God Himself must be present in us, disposing us to will and to do of His good pleasure, for that, without this daily sanctification, the Pattern which we are unable to imitate would be but a sad remembrancer of what we had lost, and the Redemption we were unable to profit by only an aggravation to our punishment. When Christ left us, by the very act of taking away the help His temporary presence had afforded He showed us our need of a helper; and when He said, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will send the Comforter to you," we believed it, not only because He said it, but because, from the very nature of the case, it was impossible that He Who had done so much for us could leave that work in a state so unfinished; we felt that "if God had given us His Son, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?"

The doctrines of Whitsuntide are not hard to him who has studied the doings of God towards man in his redemption through Jesus Christ. Whatever be the power of the Holy Ghost, he must feel that Christ could no more have left him without it, than He could have

built an ark and left those for whom it was built outside of it.

Granted Redemption, Regeneration is a necessity. These are the Christian privileges, part belonging to this world, and part belonging to the world to come, and these we enjoy in virtue of our union with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Into this Name we have been baptised. Now, to be baptised into a name is, as we have seen, to identify ourselves with him who bears it in all things, so as to suffer what he suffers, to enjoy what he enjoys, to do what he does. When the Israelites are said to have been baptised unto Moses, it signified that they had cast their lot with Moses in absolute Faith, to adventure the apparently impossible passage which he adventured, so as to partake with him either the destruction or the salvation, as the case might be, which would result from it. So, also, to be baptised with the Baptism of John, signified to take part implicitly with John in all that he himself practised and proclaimed—self-denial and repentance.

The very same idea is conveyed by Baptism in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. It is to avail ourselves of the gift which our Saviour pur-

chased for us, and by our own act to make ourselves one with the Holy Trinity, into Whose Name we have been baptised; and, in so doing, we have obtained our title to our Inheritance, so as to enjoy the blessedness of Heaven when it shall please God to call us there, and on earth to be partakers of the offices of the Three Persons into Whose Name we have been baptised, so as to receive the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

So far we have been taught by the Christian Seasons, which have been unfolding, one by one, the doctrines of the Christian Church, and with them we have learned the privileges of Christian Churchmen.

We now take one step farther.

In being baptised into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we have engaged in something more than this; we have cast our lot with the Blessed Trinity wholly and entirely; we have made ourselves partakers of their Work, as well as of their Blessings.

Our next step, therefore, is from the doctrinal part of the Christian Year into the practical part. If Love to men be an attribute of the Father, then, by becoming one with Him

in Baptism, we have bound ourselves to love our neighbour, because He, into Whose Name we have been baptised, loves all men. If Christ made Sacrifice of Himself in order to bestow upon His faithful people Free Grace or Help, then we, by being baptised into His Name, have bound ourselves to do according to our power what Christ has done, and to deny ourselves for the service of others; and if it be the office of the Holy Ghost to bestow Comfort, and Enlightenment, and Purity, then, in putting on His Name, we have made it our office also.

Thus it is that Trinity Sunday has been the connecting link between our Faith and our Duty, our Hopes and our Services: it is our Baptism in that great Name which seals to us both the one and the other.

But Faith comes first, and Duty afterwards.

And so it does. Faith comes first in the Catechism, in which we are taught the Creed before we come to the Commandments. Faith comes first in the Seasons of the Church, wherein the doctrinal half of the year precedes the practical half. Faith comes first in the teaching of our Lord, Who unfolded to the disciples the mysteries of the kingdom before He appointed them their Work in the

kingdom. And Faith comes first in our own lives.

But let us remember that it comes first, not as being of the greatest importance, not as though there were the possibility of a choice between Faith and Works, not as though we could say, "thou hast Faith, and I have Works"—we can no more make that choice than we can choose between the Seasons of the Church, and say that we will live all our lives in Advent, or in Lent, or in Easter-Tide, or in the Days after Trinity. Faith and Works are distinct from each other, but only as cause is distinct from effect; they are so connected, as to be inseparable even in thought. "Show me thy Faith without thy Works," says St. James. Show it if thou canst—it is impossible; Works are the body, of which Faith is the soul; Works are the outward visible sign, of which Faith is the inward spiritual grace. It is impossible. But I will show thee my Faith by my Works, which as Faith is spiritual, and, therefore, unseen, is the only possible way in which I can exhibit it to mortal eyes.

Thus it was, that while in the former part of our Christian Year we were considering the articles of our Faith, we could not do it without indirectly teaching our duty also; and

now that we are opening out the practical part of the year, we can not contemplate our duty without, in so doing, referring back to our Faith. It is impossible to separate them, for by the doctrines of Trinity Sunday, alike the summary of our Faith, and the summary of our Duty, our Faith and our Works are both bound up in the Great Name of God.

But can you understand the doctrine upon which all this rests, which is called the doctrine of Trinity Sunday, but which is the doctrine of Trinity Sunday more than any other Sunday, only because this is the recapitulation of all that you have been learning? Can you understand how the Father, Who sent the Son to redeem, the Son Who redeemed and sent the Holy Ghost to sanctify, and the Holy Ghost Who was sent and did sanctify, are all One God?

Not one word of it can you understand—not one word of it can any man understand—and yet this is the point upon which the whole of your religion rests—all that we have been considering from Advent Sunday to this Day.

If you *could* understand it, you would be God, not man. Christ revealed to us many things—everything, indeed, which related to

man—which things being finite, are comprehensible to finite understandings; but when He came to reveal about God, He spoke of that which was infinite. He could not show this to such as we, not that He could not tell, but that we could not receive His Words. The wide sea may be poured into a vessel, if God were pleased to make a vessel fit to receive it, but we could make no such vessel. Man tried once to reach Heaven—it was on the Plain of Shinar—and he did it only to find out his own utter weakness and incapacity.

Christ the Lord, when He came among us, brought down, as it were, the Heaven to us, and showed it us, and added it to our view of the earth, so that it seems now to touch it, and belong to it; as the far horizon seems to touch the edge of the landscape, looking as if, were we once at that far point, which after all does not seem so very far, where earth and Heaven unite, we might step from the one to the other.

It is only as we advance in our journey that we find that the horizon recedes; it is only as we learn to know more of God, that we learn how much more there is to be known, that every point gained opens only some other point; and that while we are in this life,

though the relation of God to man has been revealed in the Mediator Jesus Christ, the abstract nature of God, as regards the Godhead, is as far off from us as ever.

Will it be always so?

“Now, we see through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face: now, I know in part; but then, shall I know even as I am known.”

But before that we must have put on immortality. The Lord God Himself said, “Thou canst not see My Face, for then shall no man see My Face and live.”

This is the difference between this life and the life to come. God has amply fulfilled the promise He made in Exodus; He has revealed His dealings to man; He has “made all His goodness to pass before us;” He has “proclaimed the Name of the Lord before us;” He is gracious to us to whom He wills to be gracious; and He does show mercy on us on whom He wills to show mercy.

Here His promise ends; and, for the present, the fulfilment of it must end also.

But the very fulfilment of that ancient promise by the First Coming and the Redemption, in itself gives us a sure hope of the fulfilment of the second promise by the Second Coming and the Restoration.

Were our knowledge perfect, ours would

be, not faith, but certainty; not trial, but reward; not the Church militant, but the Church triumphant. The darkness which surrounds us now, as to some things pertaining to God, was given us that we may see better those things which concern ourselves. "Light," says Sir Thomas Brown, "that makes all things seen, makes some things invisible; were it not for darkness and the shadow of the earth, the noblest parts of creation had remained unseen; the stars in heaven would be as invisible as they were on the fourth day when they were created above the horizon with the sun, and there was not an eye to behold them." The greatest mystery of religion is expressed by "overshadowing" [of the Holy Ghost,] and in the noblest part of the Jewish types we find the cherubim *overshadowing* the mercy-seat. Life itself is but the shadow of death, and souls departed but the shadows of the (really) living; all things fall under this name, the sun itself is but a dark simulacrum, and Light is the Shadow of God.

But that light, that shadow of God, still rests upon the earth, and will so rest while the earth itself exists, for the Lord has spoken it. The Lord Himself has called the Church His Body; in it He reveals Himself now, so far as

He can be revealed; in it He preserves now the communion which shall one day be visible, and in it, having preserved us through life, He will continue us after death.

H.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

LOVE TO THE BRETHREN IS LOVE TO GOD.

1 St. John, iv. 7.

"Beloved, let us love one another : for love is of God."

THE Catechism contains the summary of religion, and in this Catechism you will see that the Creed comes first, the Commandments afterward. This is no accidental arrangement, it occurs in the calendar also; it is the Church's invariable rule of teaching, and is a lesson in itself. Faith does come first, Duty does come afterwards. It is so, and it must be so, in all religion, and if ever we try to reverse the order, to do good works first, with the idea of coming to be faithful at some future time, we are quite certain to let slip not only our faith, but our good works also.

And in saying this, do not let me be supposed to place Faith above Works, as some people have done. I no more say which of the two is of more importance to the Christian life, than I say whether a heart or a head is of

more importance to the physical life. Faith is the reason why we do good works; good works are the fruit of a lively Faith. Because I say that one is the cause, and the other the effect, I do not say which is of the greatest importance, the cause or the effect. If any one were to ask me that question, I would ask him in return which part of his clock he thought most necessary for telling the time, the works or the hands. His clock is made for a definite purpose, and that purpose is to point out the time. It had all things given it which were necessary for that purpose, and nothing that was not necessary. If it happens to want any one of these necessary things, everything else is perfectly useless. How can we say, then, that any one part is more necessary than any other?

The works may go correctly enough, but of what practical use are they if they had no hands to move? What were they put into the clock for, except to move those hands. And as for the hands, if they had not springs and wheels to move them, they might look well at a distance, and point the true time when the time came round to them, but they would be of no use as a measure of time; that is to say, they would not do the only thing they were intended to do.

But a man's works are manifest; we seldom see much of his faith except through them. This is why St. James says, "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."

True, we look at the hands of our clocks much oftener than we look at the works, and perhaps the better the clock goes, the less the the works are looked to or thought of. No doubt the hands are intended to be outside where people can see them, and the works inside where people cannot see them, but this does not make that which is looked at of more consequence than that which is not seen. No doubt if the hands were concealed they would be useless, and if the works were exposed to everybody's sight, and to the wear and tear of ordinary life, they would become injured and clogged with dust and dirt, and would first go wrong, and soon not at all. Everything must be in its place, and when the hands keep true time, we know that the works go well, and when the works go well, the hands will keep true time; neither is of more consequence than the other, but for all that, it is quite true that the works move the hands, and not the hands the works.

Now this is the reason why the Christian Year is arranged as our calendar has arranged

it. The calendar has placed the doctrinal half first. It has gone through all the history and the dogmas of religion, all that concerns our faith; and then, and not till then, it points out our duty. This does not mean that what we have learnt in the first half of the year is of more consequence because it is placed first; it means this, that the first is the cause, and the second is, or ought to be, the effect. It first says very distinctly, "See what Christ has done for you," and then significantly adds, "Do not you think you ought to do something for Christ?" "We love Him," says St. John, "*because* He first loved us." The Church, therefore, exhibits to us in their proper order all the marks of love which He has shown us. Here is your Gospel—the Good Tidings of great joy to you and to all people; and, having done so, it says, "What manner of men ought you to be in all godliness?"

You now know the whole of your religion; you were warned at Advent that your Lord was at hand; you were shown how, by His Scripture, (2nd Sunday,) by His ministers, (3rd Sunday,) by His own Presence, (4th Sunday,) you would be strengthened to follow His steps if you did really and earnestly desire to prepare for that day. On Christmas-Day you had a pattern set you, God Himself living as

He would have you live. You were told that readiness, (St. Andrew,) and faith, (St. Thomas,) and courage, (St. Stephen,) and love, (St. John,) and purity, (Holy Innocents,) would be necessary for following this pattern. You were told that nothing could be done without willing obedience to the Law on your part; that you were to obey, not because you saw the good of this, but because it was the Law, (Circumcision.) You were then shown the part you yourselves had in this dispensation; how the tidings of great joy became tidings of great joy to you; which became so, not because you had deserved them by showing any particular goodness which distinguished you from others, but because Christ was pleased to manifest Himself to you, and in you, the fruits of that Divine Nature of which you are partakers (Epiphany.) You were then shown your Lord's domestic virtues as so many mirrors in which to see your own conduct; as if it were put thus: You have promised to follow Christ; now see what Christ did at home, and among His friends. You were called upon for watchfulness and self-examination, to see whether your virtues were like His, as you promised they should be (Septuagesima, &c.,) and for penitence when you saw that they were not (Lent.) You were shown

the great Atonement that was necessary to render even that penitence available (Good Friday,) and the glorious reward which that Atonement had purchased for sincere penitence (Easter.) You were then shown how that you need not fear, even though the temptations of this world surrounded you, and the overflowings of ungodliness made you afraid; how that a fold was prepared even here, even in this world, for the sheep which their Heavenly Shepherd had redeemed; how that an ark was made ready to preserve His followers even while they were tossed on the wild waves of the world, so that amid all perils they would be safe in the ship where they were with their Lord (Sundays after Easter.) Then you had a glimpse, a slight one it is true, but still a glimpse quite sufficient for the eye of faith, of the prize of your high calling. You saw the Human Body like your own taken unto God (Ascension.) You saw no more, for mortal eyes could not behold it, nor mortal mind conceive it, but you were not left comfortless. You had strength sent down to you. You were shown how the Church became the Bride of Christ, and yourselves the dwelling-place of God, and how Baptism and the Lord's Supper became not signs merely, but living means of Grace and Salvation

(Whit Sunday,) and you returned thanks and praise and glory to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the work done, the Redemption finished, the Heavens opened, the Mansions prepared both in earth and in Heaven (Trinity Sunday.)

“Look back on these things,” says the Church. “These are your good tidings—this is your salvation—this is what Christ has done for you—you know it all now. But what are you going to do for Christ? that is the question; hitherto we have heard of nothing that we have done for Christ; it has been all what Christ has done for us.”

But now the Church, who has hitherto been telling us all this as matters of faith, turns at once to matters of duty. “Beloved,” she says, “if Christ so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

Now mark this, because the lesson which the Church gives us here, does not lie in the words, but in the place which the words occupy, and that place is after the summing up of all that Christ has done for us.

You see what has been done—you have no means of repaying this, or of even showing your gratitude for it—you cannot do more than your duty, for your duty is to do all that you can—nor can you see Him Who has done

all this for you—"no man hath seen God at any time." But would you serve Him? Serve Him, then, in the way He has pointed out. He lived in this world that you should be like Him. He loved mankind—you must have seen that by this time—be like Him, then, and love mankind too. You have heard Him say that He is with you always, and His Spirit is within you; "but," says this Sunday's Epistle, "His Spirit, as indeed you must have seen, is love, and if you do not love those about you, as He loved, you may be sure the Spirit of love does not remain in you."

This is the reason why the half of the year which relates to duty comes *after* the half of the year which relates to faith—because it shows at once the meaning of Christian duty. It is right, no doubt, to love mankind, and so many a heathen has said before St. John lived or wrote. The Church says so too, but, you will observe, the Church does not say, love mankind because it is right, or because it is best for the general interest, or because virtue is admirable in itself. All that it might have said, for it is true, but it does not. What the Christian Church does say is, "Love mankind, in order that you may be like Christ," and it would be idle, aimless, to tell us this

24 LOVE TO THE BRETHREN IS LOVE TO GOD.

unless it had first told us what being like Christ means.

This is the Epistle for the first Sunday after Trinity, and it is, of course, addressed to Christians only; that is to say, to people who know the history, and the doctrines, and the rewards, and the graces of the Christian religion. St. Paul did not tell the Athenians to be like Christ, and to love one another because Christ loved them—it was very true—but to them these would have been idle words.

It is to you, Christians, the Church speaks; it says, pointing to all those Sundays you have gone through, “Here is your course—here is your pattern—here is your reward—here is your grace or assistance—now go on, try what you can do in this course, after this Pattern, with this help, for this reward. The first thing that you see your Pattern did was to love *you*, and that before you loved Him—try this first, that is evidently your first duty—it will open your eyes to other duties, but try this first, for it will form a pretty good test to yourself whether you are in earnest, and, consequently, whether you have that daily help to which, as Christians, you are entitled; for as this help is secured to you as members of Christ, as His members you cannot but have it now and every day, unless you have ceased

to be members of Christ. You can make no mistake about it; you cannot doubt that Christ did love and does love—you know that well enough—you know, also, if you believe anything that you read in the Bible, that He has given us of His own Spirit. Here, then, at once is your duty and your test—you are to act in His Spirit, and His Spirit is love—your duty is easy if you have still the Spirit of Christ which you certainly had once—if, therefore, you find that duty too hard for you, you cannot have that Spirit now—you must have lost it.

I have shown you why the teaching of the first Sunday after Trinity comes where it does, after the doctrines of our Faith, and now I will show you why it comes where it does, before the teaching of the other Sundays. Love is the sum of our duty, all that which follows are details—but details of the same duty. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. That means that love, perfectly understood, fills up the whole of the law. A man that really loves his neighbour will not rob him, nor murder him, nor take his wife from him, nor speak ill of him, nor wish for his property or belongings, therefore, to such a man as that, love alone is as good as the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth,

and tenth commandments put together. This first Sunday, therefore, lays down the principle for the teaching of all the other Sundays after Trinity. It is as if the Church said to us now, "Settle your minds to love your neighbour, as the only way in which you can be like Christ, or can show your gratitude to Him;" make this the principle of your lives, and then we will go on and see how this general principle can be fortified, and explained, and carried out into detail, and adapted to the different circumstances of common life. All this we will see as we go on, but depend upon it, there are but two principles, one for each division, and these two are very much alike after all; the one is love to God, the other is love to man. They are, in fact, but one principle differently applied. Love to a superior, whom we would serve, but cannot find how to offer acceptable service, is *reverence*. Love to an equal, whom we can serve and benefit in one way or other every day, is, in thought, *benevolence*, and when that thought comes out into deed, *beneficence*. It is the same feeling, but differently worked out according to circumstances.

Look at the example that follows; it is that of a man who did not love—the parable, if indeed it be a parable, and not a true and

awful history, of Dives and Lazarus. See how much it adds to the terrible significance of the lesson; we hear of no harm that Dives did; of no wickedness that he committed; neither our Lord directly, nor Abraham indirectly, reproaches him with his misdeeds; it is simply that he did not love his brother; it is simply that he permitted Lazarus to lie at his gate in want and misery, while he was clothed in purple and fine linen. Men overlook the great lesson of this history until they reflect on the place it holds in the Church's teaching, where it shows us that our profession is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him, that Christ so loved mankind, that He gave Himself for them, and that if we will not sacrifice something of ours, our time, our thoughts, our labour, our wealth, we are not following our profession, and becoming like to Him who gave *all*; and that if we are not in some degree like Him, if we have not in some degree fulfilled our mission, and done our duty in that state of life unto which He has placed us, not only we cannot expect to be rewarded, but we cannot of our own nature enter into the place which we have not qualified ourselves to enjoy.

The very first of all our Christian duties is

that of love, because Christ loved. The only way in which that love can be shown, is by doing good to those to whom Christ would have good done. But we can do no good thing without the help of God: therefore it is, that on this, our first step in Christian duty, we pray that God would grant us the help of His grace, that we may please Him by keeping His commandments, (and we have seen what the sum of those commandments is, both in will and deed,) through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In order to understand the lesson taught us by the services of this Sunday, we must recollect that which we learnt on the Sunday preceding it. This was the summary of our duty as Christians, and this we saw consisted in loving man because Christ loved us. The Epistle for the day told us this in so many words, besides showing us that it was absurd for a man to say he loved God whom he has never seen, if he does not love him whom he has seen, for whom that God died. It reminded us that He Whom we profess to love gave us this very commandment, that he who loveth God, loves his brother also.

This lesson was enforced in the Gospel by the example of a man who did not love his brother—of whom we hear no harm, against

whom is recorded no sin, of whom all that we know is, that he cared not for the poor man at his gate, and who, for no other reason that we know of, is lying tormented in the flames.

And thus we see that the first principle of the Christian religion in the first half of the year, which teaches of Faith, is glory to God in the highest; but the first principle of the second, which treats of Duty, is peace on earth, and good-will towards men.

H.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE NATURAL REWARD OF LOVE.

1 St. John, iii. 13.

“Marvel not, my brethen, if the world hate you.”

LAST Sunday we gained a clear insight not only into the principle of Christian duty, but into the great object of the Christian religion itself. This, as we may recollect from its first announcement, is “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.” The Gospel was intended, no doubt, to show forth God’s glory, and to declare His good-will towards men; that is to say, His intention of restoring them to the place and the favour they had lost, and of offering them another and a better world. But it had another object also. There is another clause in the announcement. His good-will was not only to be shown eventually, and in another life, it was for this world, as well as for the world to

come, for it was not only "good-will towards men," but "peace on earth."

We were baptised into a Church of which these are the principles. We engaged in the service of a Master whose object in coming on earth at all this was declared to be; and when we engaged as His soldiers and servants, we certainly did engage to set forward our Master's own work; but we are Christ's soldiers and servants on *earth* as yet, and, therefore, though we certainly are concerned in the whole of His work, that part which relates to the earth on which He has placed us, marks out the especial duty to which we are called. We, who ourselves live on this earth are to serve Christ by promoting peace on earth, and by good-will among the men, who, like ourselves, are yet living in it.

This seems an easy duty, and, moreover, a very pleasant duty. There is no doubt but that if we do good to men, out of common gratitude they ought to love us. They may not be able to serve us perhaps, for all cannot serve all; but, at all events, if they cannot return our good service in kind, they will return it by love, and thankfulness, and kindly feeling towards us; and this is a very great reward in itself, perhaps all we want, or all that we are capable of receiving.

What a heaven upon earth am I describing when I say that we are all Christians, all brothers, all doing good to all whenever we have an opportunity, and all returning grateful and thankful feelings, so that he who does the service is made even happier by it than he who receives it.

Yes, I am describing a heaven upon earth; but Heaven is not upon earth yet, nor will it be till all bad passions are rooted out of it. There is envy, and discontent, and covetousness, and distrust, and a thousand more fruits of the fall, which stand between us and such an imitation of Heaven as I have been showing you. Duty easy! Yes, duty would be easy enough, had it not been for the fall of man, and not only easy, but pleasant also; the very highest of pleasures would duty be—that of being fellow-workers with Christ. Duty will be easy and pleasant hereafter, but duty is not easy and pleasant now. Our Master's work was not easy and pleasant while He was living our life and setting us our pattern. How can ours be? Has He ever led us to expect that it would be? Has He not, on the contrary, taken every opportunity of telling us, over and over again, that we are not to expect it? Did He not discourage men from following Him? Did He not tell them that

“foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head?” And when they did follow, and became His disciples, did He ever lead them to suppose that they would gain what the world calls happiness from their choice? If people called the Master of the house Beelzebub, He told them, (and they saw that,) what would they call His servants? And when His cruel death was at hand, that was the very time He took to tell them that the disciple was not above his Master—sufficient for him if he should be as his Master—that is to say, persecuted, betrayed, put to death. Following Christ in anything is no easy duty, depend upon it, or Christ Himself would not have called it a “strait path.” It might be an easy duty if we would all agree to act up to the promises of our Baptism, and cast out, once and for all, the works of the Devil, “the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh;” but we will not—and, therefore, our duty is hard—and others will not, and, therefore, our duty is unpleasant.

Gratitude and thankfulness make the duty of loving our neighbours easy and pleasant; but gratitude and thankfulness we shall not meet with, and for this evident reason, there is

no reproach so keen and so cutting to those who know their duty, and do it not, as the acts of those who know their duty, and do it; these things cut far more deeply than words, and, therefore, men are not thankful and grateful; they would be thankful and grateful for the service and the good-will, perhaps, if that were all, but it is not all; they are not thankful, nor grateful for the reproach that it conveys without intending it, by holding up to the eyes of those who will not do their duty and are seeking an excuse to their own consciences, the example of those who have done it, and the proof that therefore it can be done.

Look back, and see how true the Lord's saying is. See who are the popular men of the world; who those are who enjoy the rewards, the earthly rewards, I mean, which ought naturally to belong to the world's benefactors. They are the free, the careless, the jovial, the worldly; not those who do really good to those about them, but those who minister to their pleasures.

The world treats its entertainers well, but how does it treat its benefactors? How did it treat its Great Benefactor? and those who came after Him? and those who went before Him? St. Paul shall describe: "They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea,

moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

This will describe it all. There may have been variations in the manner in which the world expresses its dislike and distrust of those who, with no earthly reward in view, would do good to it, because their Master did; there may have been variations, because the world itself varies; one age is stern, and another age is liberal; one age persecuted by blood and cruel deeds, another by malice and cruel words; but it is the manner only that is different, the spirit is the same. The world hates its benefactors, because its benefactors cannot help being its reprovers. It is ashamed to say boldly that it persecutes them for the good they do, or, more truly still, for their tacit reproof; so it maligns them—"it lays to their charge things that they know not."

Now this is the lesson that the Church sets before you on the Second Sunday after Trinity, that is to say, at the very first step of your Christian duty; and it is very remark-

able that it is also the lesson that she sets before you at the very first step of your Christian faith. I mean it would be very remarkable and very curious, (for it is not the way the world deals with us,) if it had not been, as I before showed you, the very lesson which Christ set before His earliest followers. It is unusual, certainly, and remarkable, that they who wish to lead us into following a path and taking up a line of duty, should begin by pointing out the dangers of the path, and the miseries through which that line of duty leads; but it is not remarkable that the Church should do what Christ did, and teach what Christ taught, for she always does.

She has a reason for this teaching; she would not have you follow Christ ignorantly; she tells you what following Him means, and bids you count the cost. Remember how, at Christmas, she called upon you to follow the example of Christ, and to be made like Him; and what was the very first lesson, that which met you on the very first step you took? Why, the martyrdom of Him who first trod that path which she is inviting you to tread. This is your faith, she said, and this is its reward on earth.

And now the Church shows you your duty

—Love, peace, good-will towards men—the commandment that we have from Him, that he who loves God, love his brother also. And what is the very first caution? Cast your eyes to the very next piece of Scripture, and read: “Marvel not, My brethren, if the world hate you.” And why are we not to marvel? Why should the world hate us, if we love it and do good to it? I have told you why; but look at the Gospel for the day, and it will tell you the same in a prophecy. And this will be our comfort too; for if He Who could so prophecy, and could so clearly see what would of necessity be—the end of all His labours, and all His sufferings, and all His Love, and good-will towards men, still persevered, still stretched forth His Hands to those who would not come, still gave forth His precepts to those who would not hear, still offered His salvation to those who turned away, still loved His enemies, and did good even to those who, by His Divine Foreknowledge, He was absolutely certain would despise Him, and persecute Him,—if He, certain of the consequences, still kept on His course, shall we, who are certain about none of these things, who cannot tell what a single good word spoken in season, or a single kind deed, or well-intentioned act, may produce—shall we

hesitate to follow where our Master did not hesitate to lead?

“A certain man,” he said, “made a great supper, and bade many, and sent his servant at supper-time to say to those that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.”

Many are the lessons which we may learn from our Saviour's words besides that which we derive from their primary meaning. We are not considering this parable now with reference to the occasion on which it was uttered, or the people to whom it was addressed. We are considering it now with reference to the place which it holds in the Church's teaching, and the lesson which is thus conveyed. It is chosen as the Gospel of the day, and as illustrating the particular lesson which this Sunday teaches; and, therefore, we consider it not as it affected those who heard it first, but as it affects us who hear it now.

The lesson of the Sunday is, that if we do what we have seen to be our duty, and love mankind, and do good to them, they will in all probability hate us; but that, notwithstanding this, the followers of the Lord must persevere in doing good, for the purpose, not of gaining the love of men, but of preserving the love of their Master.

In illustration of this we see that the

Lord Himself made a great Supper, and bade many; and that all that he bade with one accord began to make excuse—that the servant told his Lord these things; that he, not discouraged, sent out into the streets and lanes of the city; that there was yet room; that he sent out again to the highways and hedges, and thus the Supper was filled with guests.

This is not the primary meaning of the parable, which was told for a different purpose; but it does illustrate the perseverance of the Lord in His love to man; and thus it bears out the present lesson. Be not weary in well doing, it seems to say; if these show themselves unworthy, try others. Remember what it is that you are trying for; it is not the love of men, or the praise of men; do not say, then, when you have failed in getting that for which you have not laboured, that you have missed your reward, and met with nothing but ingratitude. If you had obtained the praise of men, (and you might, for so capricious is public opinion, that it does occasionally light on those who are deserving of it,) if it had so happened that it lighted upon you, *that* might have been your reward. As it is, your reward is to come; it is certain, but it is as yet future. Only persevere. We

know who said to those whose duty it was to stand in the front of public opposition, "if they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another." Do not be discouraged; go on in the work set you; for "verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel; you will not have accomplished the whole of your work till the Son of Man be come."

No man can mistake the practical lesson which this Sunday conveys, who considers the difference between good works in the abstract and works done unto Christ. "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them; and if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do the same."

"But love your enemies; do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest, for He is kind to the unthankful and the evil."

This is the lesson of this second Sunday, as compared with that of the first. It is a caution, no doubt, and a warning against the disappointments which invariably await every kind, benevolent, enthusiastic man who sets out in life under the determination of doing good for his fellow-creatures; it guards him

against the inevitable disappointment which always attends those who look for their reward in the gratitude of man; but, at the same time, it gives him a strong, though it may be a rough lesson, on the doctrine of motives. We Christians do good to men not for their own sakes, but because they are the representatives of Christ; we serve them, because, in so doing, we serve Him.

If we do our duty under these motives, we shall never lose our reward. It is not His fault, no, nor His Church's fault, that we will, despite all warnings, lean on the broken reed of man's opinion and perishable popularity. Our Lord in His Scriptures, and His Church in her Calendar, have given us warnings enough if we would take them.

Look at the parable of the sheep and goats. You remember those who were set on the right hand, they were those who had fed, and clothed, and visited, and tended the Lord Himself in the persons of His brethren. There is not one word said here about the thankfulness of the brethren, or the success of the visit, or the manner in which the hungry, the naked, and the sick, profited by the benefits bestowed upon them; for anything we know, they might have been unthankful and ungracious; for anything we know, they

might have rendered to their benefactors "evil for good, and hatred for their good-will." Not one word is said about *them*. It was their Lord who had been visited, and tended, and fed, whatever His representatives might have been; and it was the Lord Himself who, for this, set them on His right hand, and took them into everlasting life.

To that Lord the Church, in the Collect for this day, bids us turn whenever we have any doubts as to what our proper course should be in the difficult task of doing good to an ungrateful world; because that Lord never fails to help and govern those whom He brings up in His fear and love. She bids us pray that He would take us under the protection of His good Providence, that He would keep us in a perpetual fear and love of His holy Name, certain that if this be the constant tenor of our lives and thoughts, we shall do our duty steadily, and perform the work of blessing which the Lord has given us to do, caring little, so far as we are concerned, whether the world appreciate rightly or wrongly ourselves and our efforts, knowing that, after all, we are but the humble instruments of which the Lord has been pleased to make use in carrying out His own great work.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE OBJECT OF LOVE.

St. Luke, xv. 9.

“Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which was lost.”

IF we were to take the lessons which the Church teaches us Sunday after Sunday, as so many independent precepts or expositions of doctrine, we should lose half their meaning.

The Church's teaching is a regular course of theology, applied to the practice of daily life; half the significance of any one step in this course, is derived from those which led to it, and half its value from the fact of its being an exposition of those which follow.

Take these three Sundays after Trinity; the whole significance of the first lesson, that which alone distinguishes it as Christian teaching, is derived from the exposition of doctrine which has been concluded on Trinity

Sunday. There is hardly a heathen moralist that ever wrote, who does not urge over and over again the duty of philanthropy, as it was called, and that means the love of our neighbours. It is the exposition of what Christ has done for us, that gives the point to the Christian lesson—"Beloved, *if* Christ so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

And similarly in the second, were we to speak of man's ingratitude, we should merely be commenting upon all history that ever was written; what is the biography of any eminently good man, but a record of ingratitude; and yet what heathen moralist is there who does not speak of the virtue of patriotism. But this is not Christianity—the Christian lesson lies in the sequence of the two passages, it is not simply that we are to love those who hate us, but that we are to love those that hate us *because* we are followers of Christ, and he loved those who hated Him.

This Sunday, also, has its own peculiar teaching; and here, as on the other Sundays, the principal lesson depends on the sequence. The first Sunday has raised our enthusiasm; we have seen how Christ loved mankind, and we would be like him; but the second Sunday checks all this, and seems even to repress this enthusiasm as unwholesome and unreal—

it leads us to expect disappointment—we are discouraged and disheartened by the lesson of the second Sunday, and naturally so. Then comes in the lesson of the present Sunday to soothe and to comfort. It is all true, it says; you are and you must be, doomed to disappointment; it is part of your trial; without it you could make proof neither of your steadfastness nor of your faith. But, cast your care upon God, for He careth for you; humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God; or, in other words, do not set up your own judgments, and when these things happen, think that they should have been ordered otherwise, and murmur that when you have attempted to follow Christ, you have not met your reward. Be humble; think that though you may not see the reason, it is God who has permitted that you shall meet with these particular trials, which, were you left without comfort or divine assurance, would naturally discourage you. It shows you that these feelings are really temptations of the devil, that they are to be resisted, that we must be steadfast in the faith, that is to say, that we must cling to the faith despite trials and discouragements. Our duty is love—our reward is ingratitude; but the God of all grace, who has called us into His eternal glory by Christ

Jesus, will, after that we have suffered awhile, make us perfect, will stablish, strengthen, and settle us.

This is the lesson of the Sunday as taken in connection with those that precede it; but it has also lessons of its own, which will be farther developed as we go on; and these are the existence of an "adversary," who is continually watching for opportunities to lead us astray from the path of life, and that of a Friend who is as continually engaged in bringing us back to it. This is not a new principle of course; the principle itself has been already explained to us in the doctrinal half of the year; what the Church is showing us now is the practical effect of this principle as a matter of duty, which before she had laid down theoretically as a matter of faith.

This lesson arises naturally from the subject; we are to love our brethren, but our brethren will be ungrateful, and will hate us instead of loving us in return. How is this?

The practical answer lies in the Epistle. It is because your and their adversary, the devil, walketh about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; because it has not pleased our Lord to take the Principle of Evil out of the world, and to free you and them from temptation. You will meet with in-

stances of ingratitude in the world, as you will meet with many other things that are altogether contrary to your Christian profession, and these instances wherever you do meet with them, are so many cases in which the Principle of Evil has been permitted to triumph, by the negligence or wilfulness of those who had grace to resist, but did not use it. That is exactly the point. Christ died to overcome the Principle of Evil, and to enable His followers to overcome it; He did not die to take it out of the world, and as long as it remains in the world, you must, and will see the effects of it. From the view and operation of these effects, you will not be preserved as long as you are in the world. You do not bear a charmed life, and you see these afflictions happen to your brethren in the world. You also will suffer afflictions. You will feel insults and injuries like other men. Why should you not? Your Master did; the comfort is no vain hope or promise, that you will be preserved from these things, because you are Christians. The promise is, that these things which you must suffer, shall not be permitted to hurt you; the promise is, that "this light affliction," as St. Paul calls it, "worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

There is, however, another view in which to take these lessons; we want, if we examine ourselves honestly, something besides comfort; we want warning, and, in truth, the tone of the Epistle is far more warning than comforting.

In looking on our transactions with the world we are very apt to consider that everything we do is right, that everything we suffer is unmerited; we talk of our love to the brethren, and our doing our own duty by them, and the ingratitude of our brethren towards us, and their unreasonableness and their hate; we give ourselves credit for far more than is our due, even when we mean well, and we palliate and gloss over our acts when those acts are more questionable. In going through the lessons of these three Sundays we are quite willing to lay them all to heart, and fully to coincide with them; we readily ascribe all the malice and ingratitude in the world to the temptations of the Evil One, but it never enters into our heads that he is tempting us as well as our neighbours, and making us ungrateful and malicious just as we see he is making them; we want comfort under the afflictions brought upon us by the unreasonableness of others; are we quite sure that others do not require this comfort under afflic-

tions brought on by our unreasonableness? This is possible, certainly, and so St. Peter seems to think when he addresses us, and tells us not to advise our neighbours to be sober and vigilant, but to be sober and vigilant ourselves, because our adversary, not our neighbour's adversary, the devil, goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour; whom we are to resist, not to teach others how to resist.

No doubt we are to teach other people these things, for we are elsewhere told to edify one another; but that is not the affair of most consequence just now, nor that which seems to have been in the mind of St. Peter when he wrote these words. He was thinking evidently that everyone of us has some hand in causing the hate and the ingratitude, and the angry and bad feelings that are in the world, because every one of us, sincere and earnest followers of Christ as we may be, is exposed to the temptation of our adversary, the devil, who is continually seeking all whom he may devour, no doubt, but is more particularly anxious for those whom he most fears to lose. St. Peter, therefore, tells us all, and all alike, to be careful and vigilant, and the Church, when she has told us all to love all the brethren on one Sunday, and on the next has appealed to our own experience that there is ingratitude in the

world notwithstanding all we are told about loving, and that, consequently, some must be disobedient to their Lord's precept and unmindful of His example, gives us in the third Sunday, when our minds are fully awake to this, the mingled warning and comfort, "Be sober, be vigilant, all of you, for your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

It is an evident consequence of this, that if our Lord Jesus Christ called us to eternal life, He will, as a necessary preliminary, give us, as often as we want it, everything that is necessary to bring us into the full enjoyment of that state into which He has called us. Calling us to a state of salvation may not be calling us to a state of present safety, but at the very least it is placing us on a path which leads to a state of safety.

But it would be absurd to suppose that He who places us on a path does not intend us to reach that place to which the path leads, or that if He does so, that He will not give us everything that is necessary to keep us on that path. The very fact of His having placed us there makes it quite certain that He will do what St. Peter here says, "stablish, strengthen, settle us."

And this opens the doctrine of the Gospel

for the day, which contains an example of the manner in which our Lord is in the habit of establishing, strengthening, and settling those who have been led astray by the fraud and malice of the devil, or by their own carnal will and frailness.

This is not so striking a doctrine to us as it was to the Jews, because to us it is so familiar; we talk so much about Christ coming to save sinners, that I am afraid these words come to us as matters of course, and that we do not realise them as we should realise cases of physical danger; such, for instance, as if we were in a burning house, or a sinking ship, and a friend risked his life to deliver us, and did deliver us. It was not so with the Jews who first heard these parables which form our Gospel; they were not altogether ignorant of the doctrine of Repentance, but the idea of the Lord Himself going after sinners to bring them back was altogether new. It ought to be always new to us, so far, at least, that it ought always to produce in us the same lively feelings of thankfulness as if we had heard it now for the first time. However, in order to understand it as they must have understood it, we must place ourselves in the situation of those who have just realised the words of the Epistle; have satisfied themselves that they

are as much exposed to the temptations of the devil as their neighbours; and have been comforted with the general promise that the Lord would strengthen, stablish, and settle them.

What does our Lord Himself say on this subject?

He describes Himself as a shepherd, a character of which we who have never seen anything like it cannot feel the full force, but the Jews could fully, for they were in the habit, every spring, of making their sheep into large flocks, and sending them into the wilderness to feed on the young pasture with which the whole desert, though absolutely bare in summer, is, at that early season, profusely clothed. He speaks of us as the sheep. He speaks of the wilderness as the world, in which, if the sheep were to venture without the care of the shepherd, they must inevitably perish as soon as the summer drought had burned up the grass. He describes the faithful shepherd as having lost one sheep, which must have strayed by its own act, and, fully aware of the inevitable consequences of such straying, grieving and thinking about that sheep till he has found it.

Supposing St. Peter's own expression were not itself inspired, itself the word of the Holy Ghost—supposing he had written the Epistle

of the day merely as a human teacher, would he not have been fully borne out in offering those words of comfort? how much more when he founded them on the much fuller and more lively representation of the same blessed doctrine by our Lord Himself?

And to satisfy yourselves that he is not only warranted in saying this, but commanded to say it, and that, after him, we, Christ's ambassadors to you in these days, are warranted and commanded to say so too, look at the concluding section of the Gospel. Our Lord never repeats Himself, He never gives the same lesson twice over. His two parables are not the same, and do not convey the same doctrine; the one is an addition to the other, not a repetition of it.

It is not a Shepherd searching the wide wilderness for a lost sheep now; that we have seen, and, it is to be hoped, laid to heart. It is a woman searching her own house for a lost piece of money. That woman is the Bride; that house is the portion of the wide world allotted to her as her own; that piece of money is still, as before, her own, and it is lost; but it bears not her own image and superscription, but that of the Great King to whom she herself belongs. The office is the same, the care, the protection, the anxiety, the searching, and

the joy at recovery, is the same; for it is the Church's duty and office to do what her Lord does; but the Lord does it throughout the wide world, while the Church does it in that portion of the wide world in which the Lord has allotted her station; that is to say, our Bishop in his Diocese, I in my parish, you in your households. If Christ's commands are universal love and brotherhood—if love and brotherhood are not universal—if the reason of this is an adversary who is continually drawing away from following those commands, those who have vowed and promised to follow them,—if the Lord, anxious that His commands should be obeyed, grieved that any should fall short, suffering Himself, because His Church suffers, from the consequences of such disobedience, has placed us all, each in his station, to see that those commands are carried out, those wanderers brought back, and has showed us by His own example how this is to be done, does not this open out to us a practical way of carrying into effect the lesson which we have learnt on the first Sunday after Trinity? “Love your brethren,” it says. “Love them, because Christ loves them and you.” But how are you to do it practically? for love, like other virtues, can be seen only by its acts. You can do this in many ways. Many

ways will be pointed out to you as the year rolls on, but do this first, at all events. Love them as Christ loved them, by bringing them back from their errors. The second parable of this Gospel contains the practical lesson to us of which the first is the example. The first shows us what Christ did; the second shows us the duty which that example makes incumbent upon us who profess to imitate Him; and not only that, but it gives us the measure of the duty, and secures us from disappointment and miscarriage by pointing out the extent of our work, and the limits beyond which we ought not to attempt to pass. Do not go out into the wilderness. Universal philanthropy belongs to Omnipotence and Omniscience. Be contented with your own place, but do in this what Christ, the Universal Lord, did for the world; and, depend upon it, this duty, like all others, brings its own reward even in the present life. The more you do it, the more of the lost you bring back, the less you will have to lament the dislike, the suspicion, and the ingratitude, which we spoke of last Sunday.

H.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE CHRISTIAN MEASURE OF JUDGMENT.

St. Luke, vi. 36, 37.

“Be ye, therefore, merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged.”

THERE is nothing easier than the practice of any one virtue we set our minds upon; nor is there any snare of the devil more dangerous than this fact; because, while we are practising a virtue, we think we are at least doing good. We see probably that Christ, or His Apostles, or His chosen servants, have done the very thing that we are doing, and we cannot understand how it is possible that we can be wrong in doing what they did. We are not wrong in doing it, but we are wrong in allowing that which in itself is right to blind us to our omission of something else which is *also* right. The performance of one duty, however well we perform it, cannot

make up for the neglect of another duty which we are bound to perform also.

It seems a paradox to say that we can be too virtuous in anything; nevertheless, it is perfectly true that if we permit one duty to blind us to the obligations of another, not only the duty performed is no compensation for the duty neglected, but it becomes in itself a sin. Pure light, we know by experiment, is the union, in their proper proportions, of the seven prismatic colours. Pure religion, we gather from the Bible, is the union, in their proper proportions, of the seven cardinal virtues.

The error of the Pharisees arose from this very source; they had favourite virtues which they prided themselves upon, and, after a time, they began to consider them as a sort of compensation for deficiencies on other points. We read about their phylacteries. Do you know what these phylacteries were? They were texts from the Bible, which they wrote upon parchment, and stitched into their caps, or upon the hems of their clothes. They professed to honour and to be guided by their texts; they hoped to be saved if they kept these words of God. Who shall say that they were wrong in this? They could not be wrong in honouring God's Word. The

point in which they were wrong was, that they *preferred* one text to another, one word of God to another word of God; it was that which led them into spiritual pride, and spiritual pride opened the door to all those sins for which the Lord so often and so severely rebuked them. The Pharisees honoured God's word, possibly; but in their honour of God's word, they rejected the Lord of Life. We have plenty of Pharisees in these days, though now they carry their phylacteries in their souls instead of their caps, and "set up their idols in their hearts" instead of putting "the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their faces."

There is no man that ever lived without one virtue; but his one virtue is very often the most dangerous quality he possesses, because it blinds him to the real danger of his thousand crimes. "If we could only see vice as it is," said a very celebrated heathen writer, "we should turn away from it with disgust." This is most true, and why do we not see it? simply because we dazzle our eyes by looking at our one virtue.

Now this is the reason for the peculiar teaching of the Church, which, after all, is but the teaching of Christ repeated. Every virtue has its danger, just as every substance

has its shadow; and, therefore, when the Church has set before us any one virtue, or any one duty, she immediately guards us against the danger into which we may be led in following it. This very warning opens out another duty, which, in its turn, has its own danger, and requires a fresh warning—and thus it is that the Sunday lessons go on through the whole year. It is easy to practise any one virtue—it is very hard to practise all the virtues. But to do this is the very lesson we have to learn before we can be considered faithful.

“Be ye, *therefore*, merciful, as your Father also is merciful;” that is, if you would be like God, be merciful *because* your Father, besides the many other attributes already considered, possesses that of mercy *also*. The important words of the text being “*therefore*” and “*also*.” And this forms the lesson of this Sunday.

On the first Sunday after Trinity, the Church taught us that Love to all Men, for the sake of Him who loves all men, is the root and sum of all earthly duty and virtue, and the distinctive mark of Christ’s follower on earth.

On the second, it taught us that this, the greatest of all earthly virtues, will inevitably

meet, as its earthly reward, with ingratitude, defamation, and persecution, and that from those very persons for whose salvation it is exercised.

On the third, it revealed to us the reason of this, by pointing out the existence of an adversary, from whose domination the Lord, and consequently we His soldiers and servants, is rescuing souls, one by one, and day by day, and showing us that as long as these souls remain under the domination of this adversary, they fight against us, as well as against our Lord, with their Master's weapons, and that these weapons are the ingratitude, the defamation, and the persecution, we meet with; which, though they not only cease, but are turned into their Christian opposites, gratitude and love, in the individuals actually rescued, yet always do, and always must, exist in the world at large, so long as the Lord has fresh work for us to do, that is, other souls for us to rescue.

Having thus warned and cautioned us, the Church then proceeded to point out the means of carrying this general principle of Love to Man into practical effect. This was done in the two parables which formed the Gospel for the third Sunday. By the shepherd searching for his lost sheep in the wide wilderness,

the Lord shows us His work; by the woman searching for her lost money in her own house, He shows us ours.

This evidently is, that we, each in his own place, are to seek for and to save the lost, even as Christ, in His place, sought for them and saved them.

Here, then, is a clear duty pointed out, and here is an example, or pattern, by which to do it; and the two parables being so nearly alike, and being placed so that the one immediately follows the other, they show us both what we are to do, and how we are to do it.

But there is a danger, and that danger arises from the difference between ourselves and our Pattern. Our Pattern is the Lord, and the Lord is God, who knows the hearts, minds, souls, thoughts, of those whom He searches for, and finds out, and brings back. He is very properly a judge of their actions, because He can see not only the actions, but the motives that lead to them, the temptations that have produced them, the precise proportions of self-will that ought to be sternly rebuked, and of weakness that may be mercifully supported.

He is graciously pleased to use our services for this same purpose—He wants to try whether we will be like Him, and, in order to

do so, He gives us some of His own work—that of saving souls. But He has not given us His own attributes—we are not, like Him, Omniscient—we cannot judge, and see, and pry, into men's hearts and minds, and weigh their guilt, and compare it with their weakness, or the strength of their temptation. When He sets us at this work, it is not that He wants our services; it is for our sakes, not for His, that He sets us at it. He will work out our work Himself if He sees us beginning it; all He wants is, to see us try and be like Him in goodness, which, at all events, (thanks be to Him,) is in our power, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, not in knowledge and discernment, which He has never placed within our power at all.

When we set ourselves up to reclaim people from their evil ways, the danger that arises to ourselves is, that we should set up ourselves to be their judges, that we should consider ourselves who reclaim better and holier, and wiser than those who are reclaimed by us. When we attempt to bring back a man from his sins and his errors, we cannot help seeing that his acts *are* sins, and his ways *are* errors, and that our acts and our ways are in this respect better than his; and this leads us to censoriousness, and to comparing ourselves

with those whom we teach, whereas the Christian feeling ought to be—I may reclaim this man from such a sin by which he is tempted and I am not; and he may reclaim me from such another sin by which I am tempted and he is not.

This, therefore, is the meaning of this Sunday lesson: “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned.” This is a very good lesson, and a very necessary lesson in itself; but it is most particularly necessary for those who, moved by the lesson of last Sunday, with all their hearts and souls are setting out to put it into practice.

Our Lord sees us, and approves of us, and appreciates our zeal; but He calls out to us, “Remember, it is your *own house* that is to be swept, not the whole wilderness; remember, you who reprove will want mercy yourselves; remember, you who judge must be judged.” If you do not want to be condemned yourselves, (and you know you deserve it,) you must temper this work with charity. You want to be like your Lord in one thing—you are very right—it is your duty; but, see, there are a great many other things in which, also, you should be like Him;

things, too, which more intimately concern you. You want forgiveness, you want blessings yourselves. He whom you are imitating in bringing back the wanderers, forgives and blesses, and will forgive and will bless you, *if you do it likewise*, but you shall be your own judges; do to others what *you* think right, and so your Lord will do to you; you may have "good measure pressed down and shaken together" if you like, for "with what measure ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you." Now go, do the Lord's work, but do it in the Lord's way.

After this comes the parable, which seems to go against the parable of last Sunday, for how are we to sweep the house and to look for the Lord's piece of money if we are ourselves blind? how are we to reclaim others from error, as is shown to be our duty by the parable of last Sunday, unless we see and know that they are errors, that is to say, judge them?

The two parables do not go against each other, they are intended to fill up each other's deficiencies. The first says, Go, and do your Lord's work; the second says, Remember how unfit you are to do it. The blind cannot lead the blind, that is true, but I think I remember Elisha praying, "Lord, open *Thou*

his eyes, that he may see." Go forth, and bring back wanderers: yes, but who are you that are going? Look at home; there is one wanderer that you may as well bring back first, and that is yourself. Nay, not first, we will not say that, we will not discourage zeal in the Lord's service. We have all sinned, no doubt, but we have not all sinned in the same way. He who most requires to be brought back in one point, may yet, if sincere, be permitted, and be able, too, to bring back another on some other point. But while he does so, let him always bear in mind that he who speaks to sinners is a sinner himself; that it might become well his Lord and Master, who is without sin, sternly to rebuke, austere to punish, were He so minded; but that it does not, and cannot become him, the sinner; that his own sins, different as they may be *in kind* from those he is rebuking, do prevent him from seeing clearly; that before he can speak as a superior to the sinner he is reclaiming, he must *be* a superior, and that he cannot be a superior so long as he is a sinner in any way. Judge! he cannot help judging; if he listens to what his Lord tells him, and sees what men do, he must judge, that is to say, he must form an opinion; but if he thinks of *pronouncing sentence*, which the word judge means

here, he will remember that his own works have to be examined too, and that a sentence is to be pronounced against him, which in some sort will be measured by his own. Judge he must, in one sense, but he will judge tenderly and mercifully when he reflects that he is judging himself, that with what measure he metes, it will be measured to him. The man who undertakes this duty—and it is a duty—would be like his Lord. Like his Lord, the text says, and uncharitable to sinners! That is not like his Lord, for his Lord is merciful, “Be ye, *therefore*, merciful.”

The words of the parable which forms this day's Gospel are well known, and so is the general sentiment conveyed by them. A man wishing to take a speck of dust out of his neighbour's eye, (which is, as you must see, really a kind action, for a speck of dust, small as it may be, is a pain and a hindrance,) is unable to do so because he has a much larger one in his own eye. Our Lord is not reproofing the man for his charitable attempt, that would be going against, not only His general teaching about edifying one another, but particularly against the parable of the lost piece of money. He is only pointing out the obstruction which a man's own sins place in his way towards performing this kind and chari-

table and necessary duty. The lesson is not that we are wrong in attempting to relieve our brother of that which injures him, but that the best way of enabling us to do so is to begin with ourselves.

Now see how the passage from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which has been selected for the day, bears upon this. It is an accidental coincidence, such as we meet with often in the Scriptures, for, in fact, St. Paul is speaking on the general subject of comfort in our afflictions. He says, however, that we know that the "whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now;" that there is no exemption, no superior class of men who can stoop down, as it were, from their perfection to those who are below them; and then, lest we should think that by the words "until now" the followers of Christ were to be considered in a different light from other people, he adds, "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

This is a very remarkable passage, and not the less remarkable that it bears a meaning which the author was not then contemplating. He was speaking of sorrow, but, as all sorrow is directly or indirectly caused by sin, it is

just as applicable to sin also. We, who have been redeemed; we, who have been bought with a price, are still waiting for the redemption of the body, and not only that, but we are waiting for it, even though we have received the first-fruits of His Spirit.

To be sure we are—the price is paid—our souls and our bodies are bought, but our souls and our bodies are not yet taken home. They belong to our Lord, no doubt, but He has, for His own wise purposes, chosen to leave them for a while in the world from which He bought them, and to leave them exposed, while they are so left, to the sins and sorrows of the world; all of them exposed, remember, our own, as well as other people's. He has not, indeed, left them defenceless, and that we may see from this passage, as well as from hundreds of others, for “we have received the first-fruits of the Spirit,” but exposed, and exposed all alike.

The inference from this, when applied to the subject of the Gospel, is inevitable. There is no such thing as absolute redemption; that is to say, complete delivery from sin and sorrow in this world for even the best and holiest of us. If, therefore, we, who are tempted, like our brethren, are sent to bring them back, they, who are tempted like us, are sent to bring us

back. We perform this duty, but we perform it humbly, modestly, claiming no superiority thencefrom, so that the God, who is the protection of all that trust in Him, without whom *nothing* is strong and nothing is holy, not even those who do His work in reclaiming sinners, may increase and multiply upon us, not His strength, that is not the first thing we want in doing His work, but His mercy; we do the work that He has set us to do, but in doing it we wish not to go one single step beyond His rule and guidance. We preach to others, never forgetting that we ourselves may easily become cast-aways, and so, that is to say, in such fear and such humility, we pass through things temporal, that *finally* we shall not lose the things eternal, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

H.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE CHRISTIAN UNDER CHRIST, THE SAVIOUR
OF MEN.

St. Luke, v. 10, 11.

“And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him.”

THE miracles recorded in the Gospel are generally considered as so many acts of Divine Power which the Lord vouchsafed to exhibit to His followers for proofs of His Godhead. These they are, no doubt, and were intended as such; they are interruptions to the course of nature such as no one but the Author of that course could have produced. But they are something more besides this, they are acted parables; each one of them conveys typically its own lesson or its own doctrine. The act itself is open to all; all who see it can understand the plain historical fact that

the blind received their sight, that the lame walked, that the lepers were cleansed, that the dead were raised, that a Human Being did walk upon the sea, that five thousand men were fed with five loaves and two fishes. The faithful only can see beneath the surface, and he who has ears to hear alone can comprehend that, from that time forth the eyes of the soul would be opened to see the way of salvation, and the feet of the helpless would be strengthened to walk in it; that the leprosy of sin would be washed away in the Spiritual Jordan, and the dead in sin would walk in newness of life; that he, whose innocence had come again like unto the flesh of a little child, would, by Divine grace, pass safely over the waves of this troublesome world, and, nourished with angels' food, would go on till he reached the Promised Land, the Mount of God.

Of this nature is the miracle recorded in the Gospel of the present Sunday. As far as the simple history of it goes, it was a manifestation of Divine Power peculiarly suited to the comprehension of those whom the Lord was then addressing, the fishermen of the lake of Galilee, but which, at the time when it was vouchsafed, was in all probability understood by them no farther than its outward and evident meaning. That meaning produced on

them the immediate effect it was intended to produce, the future Apostles were convinced that He who could perform such miracles, must perform them in the Power and Spirit of God; they believed, they forsook all, and followed Him. But in all probability it was not till after the Ascension, not till the Holy Ghost had taught them, and "brought all things to their remembrance" whatsoever their Lord had told them, that they understood the full import of the Prophecy and the Revelation which at that time had been delivered to their keeping.

The Lord had been teaching the people at large out of the ship of the sons of Zebedee, and having done so, He called upon them to launch out into the deep, and to let down their nets for a draught. They had toiled all night, and had caught nothing, but were willing, at the word of their Teacher, to let down their nets. They forthwith inclosed a multitude of fishes far greater than their nets were calculated to bear. These were broken; they then sought assistance from their partners in the other ship, and, notwithstanding their broken net, they secured more than the two ships together would hold, and they began to sink.

"When Simon Peter saw this, he fell down

at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." So far the object of the miracle is revealed to him that he sees the Divinity of Him who wrought it; for, "calling back to his consciousness the sins he had committed, he is alarmed and troubled at being unclean, and believes it impossible that he, being such, can receive Him who is clean, for he has learnt from the Law to distinguish between that which is defiled, and that which is holy." (Cyril.)

You will observe that the Lord reveals to him nothing farther; He simply reassures him; "He tells him not to fear;" He promises, indeed, that henceforth he shall "catch men," but how, and by what means, a sinful man, weighed down by the consciousness of his own sins, and fearful for himself, shall be a means of salvation to others, He does not reveal. The mind of the Apostle is not yet prepared to receive this. Like Abraham, he was called, and like Abraham, he left his country, *not knowing whither he went*; but he acted up to the light which had been given him. He who has performed so great a miracle tells him not to fear, and he casts his fear aside; He who has thus manifested forth His Glory, calls upon him to become, like Himself, a fisher of men, and he forsakes all, and follows Him.

Such is the obedience which Christ demands of us, immediate, implicit, up to the revelation already afforded us, and not seeking to be wise above that which is written.

A farther revelation of God's will is the reward of this implicit obedience; and a farther comprehension of the parable, as the Church received it in the times of fuller revelation, will carry us one step farther in the lessons of the Christian Year.

The Jewish Church had toiled during the dark night that preceded the Advent of the Lord, and had taken nothing, for the Lord was not in the ship. He comes, He teaches the people as one of themselves; a prophet the Lord God raises up from among their brethren, like unto Him who foretold this, and Him they follow. He calls to those whom He had thus secretly chosen to launch out into the deep for a draught. "The Lord gave the word, great was the company of the preachers;" they let down the net, and inclosed a multitude of fishes. That net typified the Christian Church, and the fishes the multitudes, good and bad, which that Church contains. The Word is first preached in Judea and in Jerusalem, and *there* the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved; but the Jewish Church is incapable of con-

taining the multitudes, and the net breaks. Then they beckon to their partners in the other ship, St. Paul and St. Barnabas are separated by them to the Holy Ghost for the work whereunto he had called them, the Gentile Church is added to that of Israel, and the *two* are filled. "When He finds not in Judea as many as are destined to eternal life," says Bede, "He seeks, as it were, another ship to receive His fishes, and fills the hearts of the Gentiles with the grace of faith."

At last both ships begin to sink, for in proportion as the world becomes Christian, the Church becomes worldly. "There will be," says Augustine, "so great a multitude of carnal men, that unity will be broken up, and the Church will be split into heresies and schisms." This Augustine foresaw, and this we see to be the case. The net is broken, no doubt, and how much more so now than in the days of St. Augustine; but the fish escape not, for the Lord preserves His own amid the violence of persecutors. And they brought both ships to land—the Lord knows who are His, and the number of His elect is sure.

Now, let us apply this to our own case, and the work which the Lord has given us to do in our days.

We may easily imagine that the honest,

sincere Christian, who has endeavoured to act up to the lessons of duty which he has learnt during the last four Sundays, must feel upon the whole a certain amount of discouragement. Let, then, us imagine that, notwithstanding the ingratitude which he has been warned to expect, he has determined by God's grace to persevere, to follow the example of the Great Shepherd, so far as has been permitted him, and to do his duty in his own house, his own state of life, by searching diligently for his Lord's lost piece of money. Discouragement from without he has been prepared for, but on the following Sunday he is warned of discouragement from within.

On hearing of the "beam in his own eye," which hinders him from doing that which he sees to be his duty, and reflecting on the truth of this when recalled to him by the consciousness of his own numerous sins and infirmities, he is tempted to say with St. Peter in the Gospel, "depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." I am not fit for this work; I see how right it is that it should be done; I am sensible of the honour conferred upon me by my Saviour, who has chosen me to be His fellow-worker; but it is an honour of which I am not worthy, a task which, from my own sinfulness, I am not capable of performing.

To such as these the lesson of this day is intended as an encouragement. They have listened to their Lord's teaching, they have obeyed His call, and at His bidding have left all and followed Him; or, as we should say, have "renounced the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh." They are then bidden by the Lord, who has called them to become "fishers of men," to draw others to Him; they try, but are unsuccessful; the remembrance of their past sins weighs with them, and they fear it is their own unworthiness that is the cause of it. To this the Lord says, "Fear not." You have toiled all night and taken nothing of yourselves, now let down your net at your Lord's words. Your net is broken, fear not; you are not alone in the world, the Lord has other servants who are your partners in this work, beckon to them; as you have been willing to help others, so the Lord will stir up them to help you; fear not, though they whom you have rescued from the waves of this world, weigh down with their carnal divisions the ship into which you have gathered them, so that it appears to you to be beginning to sink, the Lord is with you always, even to the end of the world; you shall bring your ships to land, with their

mixed freight, where the good shall be gathered into the Lord's baskets, and the bad shall be cast away. This is your work, do it in faith, and while you are doing it in faith, never be so cast down with the sense of your own sins and your own unworthiness as to give up your work, the work that the Lord has set you to do, and thus call upon the Lord God to depart from you. Once you might have hid yourselves from that presence under a sense of your sins, as your first father did, but the Lord God hath taken that nature upon Himself, sinful and unworthy as you have made it, and in so doing hath sanctified it, that His eyes might still look upon it. It is not original sin that need keep you from this, this the Lord hath washed from you. It is not your own past and repented sins, these we have a sure hope that the Lord will put away. Remember the past, then, not as a discouragement for the present, but as a warning for the future; the Lord in calling you has made you partakers, not of His work only, but of His Nature; you can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth you. Only hold fast that thou hast, and let no man take thy crown; only keep what the Lord has given you, and defile not that which He has made clean; the past is past, and for the future, learn from the

Epistle of the day how you may *continue* worthy of the vocation whereunto you have been called. "Be of one mind," says the Epistle, "one towards another," for you are all in communion with Him who is the Head of all. "Love as brethren," says the Epistle, "for you all are brethren; that is, you are all adopted sons of one Father." "Be pitiful, be courteous," for the Lord is full of mercy and loving-kindness, "render not evil for evil, or railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing," that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in Heaven, for "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth His rain on the just and on the unjust." Do this, knowing that *ye are thereunto called*, that this is your very profession as Christians, do it as you would yourselves inherit a blessing.

"You wish," says the Epistle "for [Eternal] Life, and would fain see the good days" [of the Heavenly Jerusalem.] Then "refrain your tongue from evil, and your lips that they speak no guile," as becomes those that belong to Him when He was Himself reviled, reviled not again. Seek peace, seek it earnestly, pursue it, you that follow the Prince of Peace. But do not mistake His Word. The Prince of Peace Himself brought a sword into the world. He, the bond of unity, pro-

duced divisions upon earth, so that in one house there would be "three against two, and two against three." And what your Lord did, that His follower may be called upon to do likewise; but still fear not. It is the *peace-makers*, not the peaceable, whom the Lord has pronounced blessed; not those who are quiet in the land, but those who spread *true peace*, the peace of God, around them, and that is warfare against sin. This, we have seen already, will be received with hatred and jealousy by those who love darkness rather than light. But for all that fear not; "be a peace-maker even by warfare," says St. Augustine, "that those whom you conquer, you may, by conquering, bring to the appreciation of true peace; for blessed are the peace-makers, saith the Lord."

You may suffer for this in the present world. "And if ye suffer for righteousness' sake," says the Epistle, "happy are ye; for your Lord, He whom you follow, has Himself said, Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven." Do not forget that "His Eyes are over the righteous," meaning thereby those to whom He has given of His own

holiness, that He sees their faithful service, that He knows the hindrances that their great enemy and His has set in their path, that He is ever at hand to succour them, and that "His ears are open to their prayers." "Who, then, can harm you as long as ye are followers of that which is good?" Who can harm you while the Lord your God is watching over you? Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, if only you sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.

This, therefore, is the lesson of the Sunday. Many are the discouragements that we shall meet with in following out our duty towards our neighbour—discouragements from within as well as discouragements from without, from our own unworthiness, from our own weakness, from the breaking down of our earthly means of success, as well as from the perverseness and unreasonableness of those whom we would love and save. But through it all we may look forward with hope and confidence if only we are ourselves faithful. The Lord is in the ship when He commands us to let down the net that is to fill it; and, therefore, though the net may be of human workmanship and all too weak for the strain, though the ship may not be able to retain the multitude, the Lord is with us still, and we

shall bring it to land, and all that He has given us; for He will hear our prayer, and, as the Collect says, will “grant that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by His governance, that His Church may serve Him joyfully, and with godly quietness.”

H.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN.

St. Matt. v. 20.

"I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

ALL that most of us know about the Scribes and Pharisees is what we read of them in the Gospels; and as our Lord there so often rebukes them, and speaks of them as hypocrites, as whited sepulchres, as devourers of widows' houses, as those who, for a pretence, make long prayers, we are apt to put upon the word Pharisee, wherever we meet with it, the sense which it bears in the present day, and to consider it as only another name for a proud, bad, hypocritical, and presumptuous man. By this we lose entirely the meaning of the Gospel for this day, which, in truth, conveys a very awful warning to us all. We are apt to read it something in this manner:

Unless you are more righteous than your proud, bad, presumptuous, and hypocritical neighbours, you shall not go to Heaven.

This is very true, so true, that few of us would be disposed to doubt it whether our Lord had said so or not; almost a truism. But this was not, by any means, what the Lord meant us to understand by it.

The Scribes were men who had devoted themselves to the study of the Scriptures, and were called Scribes, or Writers, from the copies they made of them. Speaking generally, Scribes meant men well versed in the Scriptures. The Pharisees were men who endeavoured to lead a stricter life than their neighbours, and who, for that purpose, *separated* themselves from society; for this is what their name means in Hebrew. It is quite true that, resting as they did upon their own righteousness, they were very generally led into the sins which such self-confidence will always produce in the very best of us, pride and hypocrisy; and this the Lord, who searches the heart, could detect and expose, and did detect and expose. But this is not the light in which they were held by the people, nor is it the light in which the Lord is considering them in this place. He is here speaking of them as the people estimated

them, and as some of them, such as Gamaliel and Joseph, really were. The Scribes and Pharisees were exactly the people who, in our days, call themselves the religious world, and were looked up to at that time as something much better and holier than the ordinary class of men. The Lord is here speaking of them in the light in which they were estimated at the time, and in which they estimated themselves.

Bearing this in mind, you will understand with what dismay those who were anxious about the kingdom of Heaven must have received the Lord's words, that unless their righteousness exceeded that of the wisest, the holiest, the most religious and scriptural people they had ever heard of, they should in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

And this comes all the stronger after the passage that goes before it. The Lord had just told them, "If you wilfully break even the least of My commandments, and teach men that they may break them, you shall be least in My kingdom;" and to this He now adds, "If you are not better than the very best you see about you, so far from being least in My kingdom, you shall not enter into it at all."

You will observe how the course of the Church's teaching in these last few Sundays

has worked round from our duty towards our neighbour to our duty towards ourselves, for the truth is, no bad man can do good to others; we bring others to the faith by being faithful ourselves. It is *because* we are the Lord's sworn servants that we are to do His work; but His work is saving souls, and no sooner do we begin it, than we find the truth of that parable about the mote and the beam. We cannot save souls because of our own sins, therefore we find that we must cleanse our own hearts in order that we may be, not worthy, but able to labour with the Lord. The whole of this teaching is, as we have seen, a succession of warning and encouragement. Last Sunday we had the encouragement, the prophecy of ultimate success, that we should bring our ships to land, notwithstanding the unworthiness of which we are so painfully conscious, if only we were in earnest. But this is the consciousness of *past* sin, and, therefore, together with the encouragement, there came in the Epistle for the same day an enumeration of the things we were to do for the *future* if we would wish to qualify ourselves for the work; we were to have "one mind," to be "compassionate," "loving," "merciful," "courteous," to "refrain our tongue from evil, and our lips that they speak no

guile;" but this is only a means to an end. If you are all this, and by the grace you have received you may be all this, you will be worthy; that is, worthy to work with your Lord in the work of saving souls—you will succeed, you will bring your ships to land.

But now comes the warning of the present Sunday. Do not imagine that this is a light task which the Lord has put upon you—that of purifying yourselves; do not think that the Lord in dying for you has taken your work, or any part of your work, off your shoulders; do not imagine that when He is said to have borne our burthens, the Scripture means that He has performed our duties instead of our performing them, in order that we may be idle, but that He performed the same duties as those which we have to perform, and by so doing, strengthened our nature so as to enable it to perform them when naturally it was unable. He worked among us, and by so doing, made us partakers with Him, or, as we call it, members of Him. "No," He says, "you must not be satisfied that the members of Christ should be as common men; you are not common men, you have received gifts and powers such as no man ever yet received in this world before; and are you, children of God, are you, inheritors of the Kingdom of

Heaven, to be satisfied with being no worse than they? I tell you that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." "Observe the superior power of grace," says Chrysostom. "He does not call the Scribes and Pharisees unrighteous, for He speaks of their righteousness; but He requires His disciples, who were yet uninstructed, to be better than those who were masters in the Old Testament." Of course He does, we have received His five talents, they had but two, and we are not faithful servants if we do no better than they, for the Lord must receive His own with increase.

The Lord now proceeds to show in what manner His subjects are to be better than those of old times. "The kingdom of God is within you," He said on another occasion, that is to say, the Kingdom of God is Spiritual, and your King must now reign over your thoughts, as well as your words and deeds. "This is expressly a New-Testament revelation, often as the Lord uses the expression the Kingdom of Heaven: I know not where you would find it in any of the books of the Old Testament; it is kept for the mouth of Him whom the Old Testament figures as a King coming

to reign over His servants; hence the value of the expression 'I say unto you;' it is in opposition to what was said 'by them of old time.' " "None of the prophets spoke thus," says Chrysostom; "they say rather 'thus saith the Lord;' they as servants repeated the commands of their Lord, He as a Son declared the will of His Father, which was also His own will, and, therefore, it is 'I say unto you.' "

But the Lord is a Spiritual King, He reigns over the souls as well as the bodies, He repeats, therefore, the old commandments as the Scribes and Pharisees understood them, and then says *now*, under the New-Testament dispensation, you must go beyond this. "You have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; this is true, this is right, as far as it goes, but I, who see your hearts, I, who must have your souls as pure as your bodies, I say unto you, not only that the slaying of the body is murder, but that, in My sight, every evil thought to the hurt of a brother is murder also." "Observe," says St. Jerome, "He says brother now, for who is our brother but he who has been adopted by the same Father as ourselves?"

The Judgment and the Council which the Lord speaks of in this parable were different courts of law, well known at that time, of

which the latter is the greatest, and that which awarded the highest penalties.

Gehenna, or the valley of Hinnom is the place which Joshua defiled, and where the offal of the whole city was carried out and either burned or left to corruption, hence the "worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched;" but all these expressions must be taken here not in their literal, but in their spiritual sense, not as Jewish tribunals, but as those of the Christian Church; and Gehenna here signifies irreclaimable and irrecoverable pollution. There are three degrees of sin, He would say—entertaining it in your heart, manifesting it in your demeanour, nourishing it till it shows itself in outward act; and these are all matters to which the children of the Spiritual Kingdom must attend. "Moses, indeed," He would say, "gave you a law for the outer man; he told you that if you killed you should die; that is well, but there is another region which that precept could not reach, a region with which earthly tribunals do not meddle, but over which I am the Lord; and I tell you that the children of My kingdom must learn to look at the least germs of evil will to their brother, the faintest rudiments of hate, as having in them the nature of the deadliest sin, implicit murder; you must look upon them as

sins to be checked at the very outset, since each growth of indulged evil will bring you under greater and greater condemnation, of which the Judgment and the Council are the type, till at last it will bring on a total and final separation of your souls from the fountain of grace, so that being entirely reprobate you shall be cast into that fearful place, of which the valley of Hinnom, with its worm and its fire, is the nearest, though, indeed, only a faint, earthly representation.”* “You have drawn no sword,” says Augustine; “you have struck no stroke, you have made no wound, but the thought of hatred is in your heart; you *are* a manslayer. So far as in you lies you have slain Him whom you have hated. Amend yourselves! correct yourselves! If there were scorpions and serpents in your houses, how would you labour to cleanse them and to live in safety! Only be angry, only let your passions harden in your hearts, and they become so many hatreds, so many scorpions, so many serpents. Will you cleanse your houses, and will you not cleanse the house of God, which is your own heart?”

You must remember that in old times when the sacrifices were typical, it was con-

* Trench.—“Exposition of St. Augustine on the Sermon on the Mount.”

sidered an absolute sin to offer any thing to God that was not perfect. "Your Lamb shall be without blemish," were the words of the Law, and one of the great causes of God's anger against the Israelites in the later days of the kingdom, was that they brought to the Lord nothing but what was lean and bad.

All this was typical also; not only of the Lord, who was Himself the Lamb without blemish, but of those sacrifices also which we His Christian people offer. We offer to the Lord "ourselves, our souls and bodies," which is our reasonable sacrifice. "When we are before Him, our Altar is our heart; our interceding Priest is His Only-Begotten Son; we offer to Him the blood of sacrifices when we devote our lives to Him; we worship Him with sweet incense when we burn with love towards Him; we consecrate to Him His own gifts that are in us, when we consecrate ourselves, and with a fire of fervent love we offer on the Altar of our heart the sacrifice of prayer and praise." And can we imagine that He who would not accept a blemished offering from the Jew when that offering was only a calf, or a lamb, will accept it from us when the offering is that of "ourselves, our souls and bodies?"

“No,” He says, “if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there,—while in the act of confession, which should precede any offering of prayer, or praise, or thanksgiving whatever, much more the Holy Communion, which is the crown and sum of all,—and *there* rememberest that thy brother have aught against thee, leave there thy gift; it is your heart that you are offering, and it is blemished, blemished with the wrong done to thy brother, it is a sin to offer what you know the Lord will not accept. Leave it. Your sacrifice is worse than useless; for with what measure ye mete withal, it shall be measured unto you again. Leave it; by offering it, you will have thrown away that which, through your Lord’s Atonement, might have been pleaded for the remission of your own sins. Go thy way; for the time think not of thy God, but of thine own past and future life, and let thy first thought in it be to cast out that which stands between thy gift and thy God.

“If we have in aught harmed a brother,” says St. Augustine, “we must go and be reconciled to him, not with the feet of the body, but in the thoughts of the heart, by which, in humble contrition, you may cast yourself at your brother’s feet in the sight of

Him whose offering you are about to offer. For thus, in the same manner as though He were present, you may with unfeigned heart seek His forgiveness: and returning thence, that is, bringing back your thoughts to what you were about to do when you first thought of your sin, you may present your offering, in the humble hope that the Lord will accept it."

This is the law of the New Kingdom; and it is "the adversary" of the *natural* man, for the natural man is at enmity with God; and in all that we do in our unassisted strength, the Law of the pure and Holy King condemns us, finds some alloy in our best deeds, some mixture of bad, some secret and unacknowledged motive that makes our sacrifice unacceptable to Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

But they who are in Christ are "in the way with their adversary;" by His power they may "agree with it," and make it their friend; provided only they do this quickly, and while they are in the way with it, for there is a time indeed, and that may be any time, after which it must appear against us before the Judge, accuse us, that is, of having sinned against grace given, of being worse than the Scribes and Pharisees; and then will the Judge deliver us to His officer, the Angel, and

we shall be cast into that prison from which the Lord has offered no redemption.

The means whereby we may agree with that which otherwise would be our adversary, the Epistle for this day points out to us. We were baptised, it tells, into Jesus Christ; and by that baptism we were buried with Him unto death. What do we mean by this? Let us think what we mean by being dead to anything. To be dead to shame is to be incapable of feeling shame; to be dead to natural affection is to be incapable of feeling natural affection; what, then, is the meaning of being "dead to sin," and "buried with Christ?" Is it not that, because we are members of that Christ who died, henceforth we should not be obliged to serve sin whether we will or not? As long as we abide in Christ, we are dead to sin; and thus, as Augustine expresses it, though sin issues countless commands to us, we need never obey it, but abide immovable, as a dead man doth. Then are we agreed with our Adversary; the Law of Christ has become our friend.

To die unto sin, does not refer unto our past sins, but to our future, he that is actually dead is freed from sin, he cannot sin any more; so you who have in baptism died to

sin must take heed that you have died once for all, so that henceforth ye should not serve sin. "If thou hast died in baptism," says Chrysostom, "remain dead, for any one that dies can sin no more; but if thou sinnest, thou marrest God's gift."

Thus it is that we are agreed with our adversary, for the Law of Christ, which would have been our adversary had it not been for the death of Christ, now becomes our friend; it now directs us in the way in which the Lord has strengthened us to walk, for if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. Remember the word "planted," it is suggestive of fruit. He was Himself planted in death, that is, buried, and the fruit of His planting was Salvation and Eternal Life; we were planted with Him, buried with Him in baptism; will not the fruit of this planting be Righteousness, Sanctification, Adoption, countless Blessings?

"Do you believe that Christ died, and that He was raised up again?" St. Paul would ask us; then believe the same of thyself: if thou hast shared in the death and burial, much more wilt thou share in the Resurrection and the Life. You are not only dead, but raised again, reckon yourselves, therefore, to be

“dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God,” instinct, that is, with a new life towards godliness; lay hold of every virtue which the Lord Himself practised here on earth; do this as having Christ Himself for your fellow-worker, for that is what is meant by the concluding words, “In Jesus Christ our Lord;” for if, when you were dead in sins, He raised you to newness of life, much more now that you are alive unto God, will He be able to keep you alive. This will be our safeguard; He will, by His grace, pour into our hearts such love towards Him, that we, loving Him above all things, will keep His commandments, and by keeping them, will obtain those promises which exceeds all that we can desire.

H.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE BREAD IN THE WILDERNESS.

St. Mark, viii. 4.

“From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?”

IT would seem that the Church regards the miracle which forms the subject of this day's Gospel as containing a doctrine more than commonly important, for the same subject occurs no less than three times in the course of the Christian Year, once on the Sunday immediately preceding Advent, again during Lent, and again on this seventh Sunday after Trinity; and this view of its importance seems to be borne out also by our Lord's own teaching, for in the Gospel we find that the miracle itself was repeated—on two distinct occasions whole multitudes were fed with a few loaves and a few small fishes.

The fact is, that these miracles embody the

leading idea of the New Covenant as distinguished from the Old—Free Grace by means of the Incarnation. It is our Saviour taking of that which belongs to us, and by His Divine Power making it sufficient for our nourishment.

On the Sunday preceding Advent, therefore, the whole Christian scheme is introduced by it, and our attention is drawn to the recognition of the Lord, as it were, by acclamation, which followed immediately upon it. "Then the multitudes, when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, said 'This is of a truth that Prophet which should come into the world.'"

Many parts in this scheme may be classed under two heads, according to the distinction made by John the Baptist, when he first announced it, "Repentance," and "Works meet for Repentance;" and, therefore, the Church in setting apart a season for each, Lent and the Sundays after Trinity, would press upon our minds, by repeating this miracle in each division, the Gospel Truth, that the power of repenting and the power of doing works meet for repentance, are both alike of Free Grace, are both alike the result of that Bread from Heaven, without which those even who are following Christ in Faith and Good Will would faint by the way.

This is not an Old-Testament doctrine—the leading idea of the Old Testament is Work and Wages—the leading idea of the New is a Gift and its acceptance. Compare the two, and you will see these two ideas the characteristic teaching of each. In the Old it is “Serve God in the Wilderness, and you shall be rewarded with the Promised Land. Serve God in the Promised Land, and you shall inherit the Blessing. Man’s work comes first, and, when done, it brings its reward.”

In the New Testament God’s Gift comes first, and when given, produces its effects—the talents are given to all the servants freely—the Ten Virgins are chosen alike, the Ten Lepers are healed alike; and though afterwards one servant proves unfaithful, five virgins negligent, and nine lepers ungrateful, they have all received the same gift. “They did all eat the same Spiritual Meat, and did all drink the same Spiritual Drink, for they drank of that Spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ; but with many of them God was not well pleased.” So it is also in real life. “Have I not *chosen* you Twelve,” said our Lord, “and one of you is a devil.” The choice, the healing, the talents, and of course the adoption, the remission, and the power of doing good works, which they

typify, are all of Free Grace, and it is not till they are given and received that the Lord says, "Watch for the Bridegroom." "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto you." "Occupy till I come."

I do not say that traces of this are not to be found in the Old Testament also, for the Old Testament is not contrary to the New; Eternal Life through Jesus Christ is offered to mankind by both; and, therefore, in those things which directly typify Christ, the doctrine of Free Grace is seen very distinctly by us who look back upon it from Mount Sion, though it was understood at best but imperfectly by those to whom it was delivered. It is St. Paul who gives the Christian key to the Rock and the Manna of the Old Testament; and thus we find that it was of Free Grace that God delivered His people from the Land of Bondage; and, having done so, and because He had done so, that He required them, as the fruit of this deliverance, to keep the commandments,—because they had been given them by Him who had brought them out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage. Still this is rather the exception than the rule of the Old Testament; and, therefore, it is that St. Paul, pre-eminently the preacher of Free Grace, characterizes the one as the

covenant of bondage, the other as the law of liberty.

We shall understand this difference better by comparing it with things which we see and do every day. You send a man into your fields to work, he is bound to work, or he would receive no wages, that is, he is under the law of bondage; but if you paid him first, and then sent him into your fields to “occupy till you came,” he would be free to work or not to work as he pleased; he would, therefore, be under the law of liberty, and if he worked for you *then*, it would be of gratitude and love, not of bondage; for what you *had* done, not for what you *would* do. When you came in the evening to see his work, if you were not satisfied you might discharge him, if you were satisfied, you might engage him for a farther period, with the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” But whether you discharged him, or whether you made him a fresh engagement, you would have paid him amply for the work which you had already set him to do, and which he had either neglected or performed, because, whether he did the one or the other, you had paid him of free grace before he had begun it.

Now the whole of St. Paul’s Epistle to the

Romans, from which the Epistle for this day is taken, and the whole teaching of the Church, from one end of the Prayer Book to the other, is based upon this same idea. I mean that God's gift comes *first*, and man's work *afterwards*, which is only another way of expressing what is meant by the words Free Grace. The expression in the Epistle is very peculiar. "Being *now* made free from sin," St. Paul says, "and made servants to God, ye have your fruit unto Holiness." According to our ideas, it would have been, that God, seeing us living unto holiness, that is to say, striving after holiness, though not strong enough to attain it, took us for His servants, and gave us Eternal Life; that is, that He gave us His help in reward for our striving as a meritorious act. This is the idea that people have when they say they do not come to the Lord's Table because they are not yet fit; they regard it as the reward of an endeavour made in their own strength. I do not say that this is not a natural idea, nor even that there is not a something of human propriety in it. What I say is, that it is not St. Paul's teaching, nor that of the Covenant of Grace, nor that of the Church, nor that of Christ. If God had not loved us before we loved Him, I am afraid He would never have loved us at all. But look

how it is expressed in God's Book. Having been made free from sin, it says, that is, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ having delivered you from the *necessity* of obeying sin, and having thus enabled you to become what you were not before, the servants of God, the fruit or effect of this is, not that you will be rewarded or receive the wages of your service, as we should say, but that you will become holy, or that you will begin to love God and obey Him, and the end of your being holy will be Everlasting Life. Death is called the *wages* of sin, and very properly, because you *earn* it by sinning. But Eternal Life is not called the wages of holiness, because holiness itself is only the effect of something else. It is called the *gift* of God.

Now you see, the Atonement comes first; then your being redeemed from the necessity of obeying sin; then your being elected as Christ's soldiers and servants; then your becoming holy; then Everlasting Life. All this is, as it were, the natural growth of Free Grace—what it would come to if there was nothing to oppose it. Your part in all this, is simply to do nothing to drive away that Grace, and so compel the Holy Ghost to depart from you.

Now this is a very different idea from your

making yourselves fit to receive the Gift, and then coming to receive it. Yours is the Old-Testament principle, Work and Wages, which really is the most natural idea, and the most likely to occur to you, because the most commonly practised among ourselves. Whereas, St. Paul's idea is Free Gift and Work; the Gift out of pure Love from God to man; the Work out of pure Gratitude from man to God, throwing out all idea of bondage or compulsion on both sides. It is the glorious law of Liberty whereby Christ has made us free.

But the whole teaching of the Church is founded upon this same principle, as well as the whole teaching of St. Paul. It is not "Be innocent, and God will adopt you; serve God, and God will strengthen you; follow Christ, and Christ will nourish you with His Body and Blood." This is all true. He will; for Grace well used is a reason why God should give more Grace to be well used also. But He will do much more than this, and, therefore, the Church's teaching is the very converse. Be baptised for the Remission of Sins, and *then* keep your innocency so acquired; be confirmed, and *then*, in that strength, go forth into the world and do your duty; receive the Communion of the Lord's Body and Blood, and then, with your souls thus

refreshed and nourished, follow the Captain of the Lord's host into the Land of Promise.

Remembering this invariable principle of the Christian Church, Free Grace, we shall be able to comprehend more readily not only the import of the miracle which we have just seen in the Gospel, but its bearing on this particular season, when we are considering "Good Works which spring out of a lively faith."

We observe that this miracle of feeding the four thousand is very nearly a repetition of that which the Lord had performed only a few months before. In both alike a number of disciples, drawn together by His doctrine, convinced by His miracles that He was a Teacher sent from God, have followed Him into the wilderness; in both alike they have overrated their strength. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. In both alike the Lord takes of that which belongs to them, but which, in its natural substance, is altogether insufficient for its purpose, and by His divine power renders it capable of strengthening and refreshing the bodies of whole multitudes of faithful followers, so that they are able, in the strength of that meat, to reach their homes, and to bring to good effect the teaching they had received.

Evidently, therefore, these two miracles typify the same thing, and that is *generally* the nourishment of Divine Grace, and *especially* that of the Lord's Supper. We are warranted in saying so, for this is the explanation put upon this particular description of miracle by the Lord Himself. "I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven," He said; "if a man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever; and the Bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

There are, however, some slight differences in the two occasions, which seem to point out different applications of the same grace.

The first occurred in spring, about the time when we read the history of it in the Church, just before Easter, for we find "the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh," and at a time when the climate is cool and pleasant, and the whole wilderness, as we read in the accounts of Eastern travellers, is one beautiful meadow of flowers and herbage. You remember how our notice is especially drawn to this; "Now there was much grass in the place;" a fact, apparently, of no very great importance, but which St. Mark repeats, calling it, emphatically, "green grass."

The time when this miracle was repeated

was about this season, during the heats of summer, when the whole of this beautiful herbage was parched and withered; and our attention is here called to the fact that the men are sitting now, not on the grass, but on the ground. Again, in the first miracle, as soon as the Lord had lifted up His eyes, and had seen the great multitude come unto Him, He said unto Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" On this occasion He permits them to be with Him for three whole days before He takes any apparent notice of their wants. All this indicates a more advanced stage of Christianity, and more severe trials, such, probably, as we may expect in the summer of manhood, and during our intercourse with the world, as compared with those which we have met with in the spring of early life. I think, also, that we find in the disciples themselves a greater amount of faith, that sort of confidence which is produced by experience of the Lord's past mercies, for whereas in the first miracle they say, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient," and "What are they among so many?" we have now confident and unhesitating obedience simply asking the question of the text, "Where are we to get it?"

Similarly, also, the miracle itself seems to

indicate a more abundant outpouring of grace, suited, not only to the increased wants of the faithful, but also to their increased capacities for receiving it. The former miracle seems intended to show the operation of Divine Grace acting upon the understanding; this the operation of the same grace, but acting now upon the soul and upon the nature—the first, what the Prayer Book conveys to our minds by the words, “Take and eat this in remembrance of Me;” the second by “The Body or the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given or shed for thee, *preserve* thy body and soul to everlasting life.”

It may seem fanciful to say that this is shown by the numbers of the loaves, that five typifies the five senses, and seven the sevenfold Spirit of Grace; but if we would understand Scripture, we must receive it as it was understood by those to whom the words were first delivered. We must consider, therefore, the sense which the Jews would put upon such words, and according to their ideas this was the emblematic meaning of these two numbers. I wish you would observe these things for yourselves, for if the Lord speaks to us in parables, we must learn the language in which He speaks. You may see it in the Bible, for there, whenever the immediate power of God

is expressed typically, it is always the number seven which expresses it. The *seventh* day was the Sabbath of Creation, the *seventh* year the Sabbath of the earth; *seven* oxen and *seven* ears of corn represented the miraculous plenty and famine of Egypt; the golden candlestick, typifying the light of the One God, had *seven* branches; the walls of Jericho fell by the power of God on the *seventh* day after the *seventh* circuit, at the sound of *seven* trumpets blown by *seven* priests. And in the New Testament there were *seven* Churches, *seven* candlesticks, *seven* Spirits, *seven* lamps, before the Throne of God, *seven* seals, *seven* vials, *seven* angels. In this miracle, therefore, would seem to be a similar indication of God's power, and that the *seven* loaves are the sevenfold Spirit of God, which suffices for the whole multitude of believers, while the *seven* baskets that remain after they were filled, show that the miracle was not for them only, but that the same sevenfold Spirit of God remains after they are filled, to fill also those that come after them, from age to age, even to the end of the world.

In this, as in the former miracle, we may observe the Lord does not Himself set the nourishment before the people, for in all the ordinary operations of grace, the Lord works

through man. "His giving the loaves to His disciples, that they may set them before the people," says Bede, "signifies that He assigns the spiritual gifts of knowledge to the Apostles, and that it was His will that by their ministry the food of life should be distributed to the Church." So it was then, and so it is now. The Lord's grace is sent to His ambassadors, and committed to His stewards, who now, as then, give His people their meat in due season.

And now let us apply this doctrine to the season in which it occurs. When the Lord called upon us for repentance, as in Lent, He offered us grace whereby we might repent; but Repentance is only a first step, the man of God is perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all *good works*; works meet for repentance, therefore works pleasing to Him is what He calls upon us now to perform. Of ourselves we can do nothing in this either; for a few days we might abide with Him perhaps, but the wilderness produces no food, we should faint by the way. Again, then, He calls us, He sees our need and offers us further grace, so that now we can do all things through Jesus Christ, which strengtheneth us. In this strength He again invites us to work with Him; the Grace of Righteousness is what He has given

us, and He tells "as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and iniquity," as you have obeyed your masters without resistance, do so now; yield your members servants to Righteousness, do not strive against the Holy Ghost, or do despite to the Spirit of Grace, and He will lead you on the way of a holy life; do this, and then you will receive, not the reward or wages of your work, these you have received already, before you were able to work at all, not wages, but another gift from God, Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord. "The good Lord," says Ambrose, "while He requires diligence gives strength, nor will He dismiss His people fasting, lest they faint by the way, either in the course of this world, or before they have reached the Fountain Head of Life. Therefore the Lord Jesus divides the food; His will, indeed, is to give to all and deny to none, and He is the Dispenser of all things; but if thou refusest to stretch forth thine hand to receive the food, thou wilt faint by the way, nor canst thou find fault with Him who pities and divides."

We address Him, therefore, not only as the "Lord of all power and might," but as the "Author and Giver of all good things," and we pray to Him, *as such*, to "graft in

our hearts the love of His Name," to "increase in us true religion, to nourish us with all goodness;" and, lest after this we should fall away, to "keep us in the same," through Jesus Christ our Lord.

H.

PROPER LESSONS FOR THE SUNDAYS
AFTER EASTER—FROM THE FIRST
TO THE SEVENTH.

FAITH THE SOURCE OF DUTY.

Psalm cxliv. 15.

“Happy are the people that are in such a case: yea, blessed are the people that have the Lord for their God.”

THE conditions on which we are admitted into the Christian Covenant, are, as we know, Repentance, Faith, and Obedience, and we should do well to notice this order in which they are presented to us, for that in itself involves a doctrine, and it is because it does involve a doctrine that the Church never deviates from it in all its teachings. In the Catechism we hear first of renouncing the devil and his works; then of believing all the Articles of the Christian faith; and lastly, of keeping God's Holy Will and Commandment. So it is in the Seasons of the Spiritual Year. To a certain extent, these three subjects must be taught

together; for repentance without faith is despair, faith without repentance is presumption, and obedience without faith or repentance, supposing such a thing possible at all, would be self-confidence and self-reliance. Still the order is adhered to generally.

And now let us see why. It is seldom of much use to point out to a man what is his real interest. He may believe and be fully convinced that the happiness of the life to come exceeds that of the present, and yet present pleasure and present temptation may, and generally does, outweigh his better judgment. Nothing future can be certain to outweigh present gratification while the mind of man is constituted as it is. We see instances every day of men sacrificing their earthly future to their present pleasures in matters which are before their eyes, and which, therefore, require no exercise of faith whatever; and if men will do this with earthly things which they can see, how much more will they do it in heavenly things which they cannot see? Nothing will keep a man stedfastly in the line of his duty, except making his present pleasure in following it greater than the pleasure which the various temptations to depart from it can possibly hold out to him. He, therefore, must have learnt to feel a positive

and present pleasure in the act of serving God, just as he would feel a positive and present pleasure in the act of doing a service or a kindness to parent or dear friend, before he can feel any confidence in his power of resisting temptations. Now we cannot love one in whom we do not believe; neither can we understand the extent of God's mercies till we have seen the greatness of our own deliverance. Hence it is that repentance, which shows us the greatness of our danger, leads to faith, and faith, which shows us the price of our deliverance, leads to obedience.

Hence, therefore, the teaching of the Church. As it is repentance that opens the heart to faith, so it is Advent that opens the heart to the mysteries of the Incarnation; and Lent to those of the Atonement. And as it is a sense of our past sins and dangers, but not without a thankful remembrance of our deliverance, which constrains us to obedience, so the doctrines of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, must have been laid to heart together before we can enter into those of the Sundays after Trinity, which, pointing out the duties of the repentant, regenerated, and renewed Christian, hold out no present inducements to the performance of them, except the natural love which we must feel towards such a Father

and Benefactor, and the natural pleasure which we should derive from serving Him.

This has been the object of the Church's teaching all along in the weekly lessons afforded by its Gospels and Epistles; and as the Old-Testament Lessons are selected as auxiliary to these, we may expect to find the same idea running through them also.

And so it is; they have done by type, by figure, and by example, what the New-Testament Lessons have done by precept and revelation. Did they not warn us of the Lord's coming in Advent, and then show us in Christmas-Tide that the Lord was the Saviour also; and in Epiphany, that His Light is manifested to us, and in us? Did they not hold out examples of repentance in Lent, in order to open out to us the mystery of our Great Passover, our Great Deliverance in Easter, and the Laws of the New Kingdom in the Forty Days, and the privileges of our citizenship at Whitsuntide?

And now that the Book of Deuteronomy is ended, and that we have entered upon the historical Books of the Bible, what do these show us, but the people of God in possession of their inheritance? not their inheritance in Heaven, but their Promised Land on earth, which, indeed, in some sense is a type of it,

but which more closely and more vividly depicts our Spiritual Inheritance, Christ's Church on earth. This is, indeed, a state of salvation, that is to say, a state in which safety is attainable under the defence of God, but not in itself and of necessity a state of safety like that which we hope to attain in Heaven.

Neither do these historical books exhibit it as a state of ease and rest; they show us battles fought, reverses sustained, and sufferings undergone; they reveal to us sloth, and negligence, and faithlessness, and rebellion, even among the chosen; they exhibit to us falls, and salutary chastisements, and timely repentance, and merciful restoration, and ingratitude, and obstinacy, and rejection. We read of continual trials, continual relapses; of victories unimproved and forgotten, of perpetual defeats, and mighty and unforeseen deliverances; we read our own history there. It is the battle of the Church against the World.

But we have always spoken of the Kingdom of God as bearing a twofold interpretation—the visible dominion of God in the world, which we call the Church, and the invisible dominion of God in each individual Christian heart. The same twofold interpretation holds still, and thus, if we may trace in

the historical books of the Old Testament the entrance of God's people upon their earthly inheritance, the Church, no less surely may we trace in them the entrance of every one of us Baptised Christians upon his own possession in that Kingdom, his own regenerate heart.

In this sense we may take the two introductory lessons from the Book of Joshua, and see in Gibeon not only the Gentile brought into covenant with the Israelite, but the natural man brought into covenant with God's Church; driven to it, indeed, by fear rather than drawn to it by love, but still entering into covenant, and preserved and defended in that covenant, not on account of his own deservings, but because of the Lord's oath. We may trace in the five Kings the five senses leaguings together to recover their dominion over the Lord's new servant, and assailing him each with its own temptation. We may see him crying to the Lord, claiming his covenanted defence and protection, and promptly receiving it, and the assailants overthrown and subdued by the might of faith, for the Lord, we are told, fought for Joshua; the Lord fights for His Church, and all that are in it.

And when Joshua called for his men of war, and bade them place their feet on the necks of the kings, what is that but to tell us,

in a type, that when the Lord has fought for us, and brought our natural passions into subjection, by means of our own efforts, He requires us to keep them in the subjection to which His might has reduced them? And is not this precisely what is repeated in the evening lesson, which contains Joshua's parting charge to those whom he had put in possession of their inheritance? "Be ye very courageous," he said, (the word is very remarkable; it means, feel all the confidence which the remembrance of such a mighty defence ought to give you,) "to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom, to the right hand or to the left."

These two chapters from the Book of Joshua, together with the two from the Book of Judges, which are the lessons of the next Sunday, not only form the introduction to the whole series, but are a key to the whole mystery of Christian Duty. They reconcile the apparent contradiction that works are necessary for our salvation, our reward being proportioned according to them, and that of ourselves we can do nothing, and are deserving of no reward whatever. We find that God's chosen people have conquered their inheritance, they have gained it for themselves, and by

their own exertions; no enemy has been able to stand before them; they have met with no reverses, except when their own sins have paralyzed their efforts, and we find these efforts again successful immediately on their sins being put away. Joshua conquers, but "it is the Lord who fights for Joshua." The Christian, therefore, works out his own salvation, but "it is the Lord who works in him both to will and to do."

But the conquest is not complete. You will remember that some of the Canaanites were left in the land inherited by the Lord's people, and that, in aftertimes, these were sufficiently strong to rise up against them, and for a time to hold them in subjection. This is the general subject of the Book of Judges. We find in the second chapter that "the Lord left those nations without driving them out hastily, neither delivered He them into the hand of Joshua;" and we find also the reason for this, that it was the trial of the Lord's people, that it was "to prove them whether they would keep the way of the Lord or not." We should do well to bear this in mind, for it is a prophecy, an explanation of the state of things which we see around us, a warning that we must not expect regeneration to exempt us from temptations, or to secure us

from falls. We are regenerate; we have died unto sin, and are risen again unto righteousness, and yet the Apostle tells us sin dwells in our mortal bodies.

What, then, have we gained by regeneration? or is it indeed true that we, in whose bodies sin still dwells, have been regenerated at all?

Let me answer this question by asking another. What had the Israelite gained by his passage of the Jordan? or is it indeed true that he, in whose land the Canaanite still dwelt, had been reinstated at all in the inheritance of his fathers? for the cases are exactly similar—type and antitype.

They had gained the SOVEREIGNTY. The original inhabitants dwelt in the land still, but they were no longer the dominant people. If ever they did resume their old sway, it was for a time only. The sins of the reinstated people had been the cause of their resuming it, and, as soon as they “remembered that God was their strength, and the Most High God their Redeemer,” then we are told “the Lord awakened as one out of sleep, and as a giant refreshed with wine; He smote His enemies in the hinder parts, and put them to a perpetual shame.”

Then this answers the question with respect to the reinstated or regenerate Christian. Sin

may *dwell* in our mortal bodies, but it no longer *reigns* in them, and if it ever does happen that the Christian is again brought into subjection to sin, it is because he does not remember that "God is his strength, and the Most High God his Redeemer." So long as we forget this our captivity lasts, and no longer.

This is what is shown by the history of Deborah and Barak. Consider Barak the type of Christ, and Deborah as the type of the Church, calling on Him to do battle for her against her enemies, and He will say to us, as Barak said to the Prophetess, "If thou wilt go with me, then will I go, but if thou wilt not go with me, then will I not go." Christ will not fight for those who do not fight for themselves.

This is the mystery of Christian obedience, and of works which are the fruits of a lively faith; works which we *do*, works according to which we are *rewarded*, but yet which Christ does in us. If we go with Him, then will He go, but if we will not go with Him, then will He not go.

"Not unto us, therefore, not unto us, but to His Name give the praise." And thus it is that the first of all the Christian virtues, and the foundation of all the others, is Humility. It is the first in the Sermon on the Mount, and

as we shall see, it is the first in the teaching of the Church.

Humility is a due knowledge and a right estimate of ourselves, founded on a due knowledge and a right estimate of God. Humility does not mean a poor or low estimate of ourselves. Hannah, whose hymn comes next in the series of lessons, the truest example of humility in the Old Testament, as the Blessed Virgin is in the New, *rejoiced*, she was *conscious* of her blessedness; she was conscious that her horn was exalted, and her mouth enlarged over others, just as Mary knew that all generations would call her Blessed; but, in both cases alike, they "rejoiced in the Lord and in His salvation," and because they knew that "He would keep the feet of His saints, for that by strength no man shall prevail."

Such humility as this, which you will easily distinguish from the humility of him who hid his talent in a napkin, is the groundwork of Christian obedience. So far from its being a low estimate of ourselves and of our own powers, it is a very high estimate of ourselves and of our own powers, it is the consciousness that we are able to do anything and everything that we are commanded to do. "Let us go up," said the faithful Joshua, "for we are well able to take it." "Thy servant

slew both the lion and the bear," said the faithful David, "and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them." This was humility, not boastfulness, for it was a right understanding not only of the source of all this mighty strength, but a thorough conviction of the tenure on which we hold it—that it is as long as Christ is in us, and no longer.

The Scriptural characters set before us during Lent were examples of repentance; those set before us at this season are examples of obedience, and illustrate this position that I have laid down as the foundation of it. The principal of these are Eli and Samuel, Saul and David; and each of these pairs are intended as a contrast between the obedience of principle, and the obedience of natural disposition. Eli and Samuel were both kind-hearted, David and Saul were both open, frank, and generous, and now we are shown these virtues under instances of trial.

In natural disposition there seems to have been a very great similarity between Eli and Samuel. Both were placed in situations of trust, both, in virtue of their offices, were required to reprove those whom they loved.

In the case of Samuel, a strong and abiding sense of duty overrides every natural affection. He seems always to be bearing in mind

the vision of his childhood, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Now in Eli this is totally wanting. He is naturally a good man. He is grieved that vice should exist; he would put a stop to it if he could, without going against his natural disposition. "Why do ye these things?" he said to his sons, "for I hear of your evil dealings. Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear of you."

Now compare this with the stern, uncompromising reproof of Samuel to Saul: "Thou hast done foolishly;" "thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord your God;" "now thy kingdom shall not continue." And again, when Saul had offended a second time: "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft," he said, "and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." "I will not return with thee," he added, when Saul, affrighted at the consequences of his offence, sought pardon; "I will not return with thee, for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected thee from being king." "And as Samuel turned about to go away, Saul laid hold on the skirt of his mantle, and it rent; and Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine that is better than thou." This was no na-

tural sternness: before Samuel said that, he "had grieved for Saul, and had cried unto the Lord all night." And afterwards we are told that, though Samuel kept his promise, and "came no more to see Saul till the day of his death, nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul." This is true obedience; it is a sense of duty against the natural dispositions and affections of the heart.

And, in truth, Saul's was precisely the character to command the respect and esteem, and even to conciliate the love, of all around him. And it is precisely this which makes his example so instructive at the commencement of a series of lessons on Duty. Saul was a man of great natural virtue—a man endowed with many excellent, grand, and shining qualities both of mind and person. He is described as "a choice young man, and a goodly; there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier son than he; from his shoulders upwards he was higher than any of the people." Naturally he was brave, active, generous, and patient. Remember how he received his first notice of his elevation to the kingdom. He made no boast of it. He left it to Samuel, who had made the announcement, to disclose it. "Saul told his uncle, he (that is Samuel) told us plainly that the asses were

found, but of the matter of the kingdom he told him not." This was quite in character; he was too proud to be vain. Again, when the people would not receive him, we find no symptoms of anger or impatience. "The children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? They despised him, and brought him no presents, (did him no homage,) but he held his peace."

When the Ammonites were ravaging the country beyond Jordan, we find Saul, king as he knows himself to be, patiently and contentedly tending his herd in the field. As soon as they tell him the tidings of the men of Jabesh, his immediate assumption of command is the conduct of a great man; and the prompt obedience paid to him by all Israel, is a public acknowledgment of his innate superiority. Then, again, after the decisive victory which followed, we have an instance of his natural generosity. The popular cry was now, "Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death." But Saul said, "There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel." All through his life we have instances of these great and good qualities, though more and more obscured; such as when, on finding that David had spared

his life, when it was evident he was completely in his power, Saul said, "Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lift up his voice and wept, and he said unto David, Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil." This frank confession of sin and injustice before an inferior in rank is the conduct of no ordinary man.

The truth is, Saul's is a character of great natural virtue without one spark of religious principle. His good and great qualities are precisely those which we admire in an ancient Greek or Roman.

Men may be inconsistent and infirm of purpose, like Samson, or may be overcome by temptation, like David, or may be corrupted by undisturbed prosperity, like Solomon, and yet be actuated by religious principles. Saul seems to have had no sense of what we should call faith at all, and, therefore, the grace of God, which "gave him a new heart," and "made him a new man," was like the seed of the sower that fell on the rocky ground; it came up, it might be, but it withered because it had no soil to grow from. "Is Saul also among the prophets?" said the people. "What is this that is come unto the son of Kish?" Therefore it became a proverb, "Is Saul also

among the prophets?" It was evident, therefore, that, popular as Saul was, to see him performing a religious act was something new and strange, so much so as to have become a proverb.

Now this gives us a key to his whole character. What he was by nature, that he remained; his natural virtues, which required no exercise of principle or self-denial, he kept; and his natural vices he kept also. Circumstances drew out these last, so that they obscured and overlaid his virtues. Had it pleased the Lord to keep him in that state of private life in which He had placed him originally, his peculiar faults would have had little opportunity of displaying themselves and eclipsing his virtues; but then they would have been known to God, though not known to man. Men might have esteemed him, and loved him, and honoured him, from first to last, and cherished his memory, and recorded his virtues; while, all the time, God, who could read his secret heart as well as we can now read his public actions, might have cast him off, not as the jealous man, or the haughty man, or the treacherous and cruel man, nor as the murderer and tyrant, but simply as the *man without faith*.

Now David, whose character comes last in

this series, is "the man after God's own heart."

Why? Were not the sins of David greater than those of Saul? Certainly they were. Saul was cruel towards those whom he considered his enemies. David murdered one of his firmest friends and most faithful servants.

But this is not our lesson at present. This is a lesson on the infirmity of human nature, even in the best of us. It is a lesson on the text, "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall." We may treat of that another time. Our present lesson is found in the comparison, not of the sins, but of the characters of these two men. We want to see why, when the first sin of David was greater than the first sin of Saul, the one was able, through much tribulation indeed, to recover himself, and to obtain pardon from God, while the other fell away from sin to sin, and at last perished in despair, with a consciousness that the face of God was turned away from him.

Alike as these two men were in many respects, the whole groundwork of their characters was entirely different.

The root, the spring, the moving power of all David's virtues was trust in God; and the root, spring, and moving power of Saul's vir-

tues was trust in himself. Both fall away under temptation. He who trusted in God, was restored, because the source of his virtue remained steadfast. He who trusted in himself, remained under the dominion of the sin that had betrayed him, because the source of his virtue became corrupted when he fell. It is impossible to read any action of David's life, or any passage of his writings, without observing the constant reference of everything to the will, the help, the grace, and the power of God. In every part of his life this appears no less conspicuously than it did on that day when, unarmed, he went forth, in full trust and confidence, to meet the Philistine, saying, "Thou comest to me with a spear and a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts." If he is in sin, "I have sinned against the Lord," is his conscience-stricken answer to the prophet. If he is in trouble, "Let him curse," said he to Abishai, when Shimei followed him with curses on his flight before Absalom, "let him curse, because the Lord has said unto him, Curse David; who shall say, Wherefore hast thou done so?" If he is in want, "the Lord is my Shepherd," he says, "therefore shall I lack nothing." If he is suffering under chastisement, "though He slay me," he says, "yet will I trust in Him."

If he is delivered from his enemies, he speaks "unto the Lord the words of his song," "The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer, the God of my rock, in Him will I trust, He is my shield, the horn of my salvation, my high tower of my refuge, my Saviour."

In this point, and in this only, lies the real difference between the characters of David and of Saul. The gradual deterioration of Saul's character is the gradual drying up of the springs of grace which were given him when the Lord gave him a new heart. David's character, under similar circumstances, did not deteriorate, because those springs never did dry up. And they did not dry up, because the Lord never fails them that continue to trust in Him. Before David was troubled, he went wrong; but now did he keep God's word.

This unshaken faith in God is the point in David's character and life which forms the example for the Christian, because it is a Christian lesson. We have seen that God, when He regenerated us, no more casts out from our hearts all bad feelings and all evil passions, which are the openings to temptation—than He cast all the nations of Canaan from before His People when He restored them to their inheritance in the Promised

Land; but that by our Adoption, which is only another word for Regeneration, He gave us a right to call upon Him in all the changes and chances of this mortal life, as we should call upon a Father for help when we wanted help, for counsel when we wanted wisdom, for support when we felt our weakness, and for defence when we feared our enemies. He gave us this right, and together with it a promise, that "His sure mercies will not fail us," and that "His strength will be sufficient for us."

But all this requires Faith; our privilege is the right of *asking* and being heard, not of being helped, and defended, and guided, and supported, whether we ask or not. If we call upon Him, He strengthens us; if we trust to ourselves, He leaves us to ourselves.

The salvation of the Christian, therefore, can never be a matter of uncertainty. How can that be a matter of uncertainty, the issues of which have been already placed in our own hands? The Christian cannot save himself it is true, any more than the heathen; but when God has already given him a guide, a defence, and a support, and his part is only to follow the guide, to seek the defence, and to trust to the support, how can he say that his salvation is a matter of doubt?

“Why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

Say rather with David himself, “Blessed is the man that hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his God who made Heaven and earth, who keepeth His promise for ever, who helpeth them to right that suffer wrong, who feedeth the hungry, who looseth men out of prison, who giveth light to the blind, who helpeth them that are fallen, who careth for the righteous.” Let him think of the mighty city of which He has received the citizenship, where there is no leading into captivity, and in whose streets there is no complaining, and then let him say with him who saw it afar off, “Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God.”

H.

NOTE.—Baptised for the dead. It has been objected, that the interpretation of this passage, as given in page 511, cannot be correct, because, as the Apostle wrote it, the word “dead” is plural, *ὕπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν*. But, in truth, the difficulty of the passage does not lie here; the argument would be precisely the same, whether the word were singular or plural; the difficulty arises from taking the word *βαπτίζόμενοι* in its theological sense, rather than that which the Apostle intended it to bear in this place, its legal import: as if it signified what it generally does, the reception of grace, rather than the form

of enrolment among Christians, which is the sense in which it is used here.

St. Paul's argument is, Why should we Christians seek to enrol ourselves (*βαπτίζεσθαι*) among those whom you consider dead? (Christ, and those of His Apostles and followers who have suffered martyrdom.) Why should I do it myself, expecting a like fate, which I very nearly experienced at Ephesus? Would it not be much better to eat and drink, and enjoy myself? for in that case it would be all the same in a short time after we were dead. Why should I have made the choice which I have made, unless I knew to a certainty that these whom you consider to be dead—this dead Christ and these dead Apostles—are, in reality, alive and in glory?

The passage is not without its difficulties; and indeed St. Chrysostom, whose interpretation of it the Editor has followed, speaks of perverse men, who, even in his time, had misunderstood it, and had been guilty of absurdities almost as blasphemous as those of the Mormonites of the present day.—Ed.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE EFFECTS OF GRACE.

St. Matt. vii. 20.

"By their fruits ye shall know them."

LAST Sunday our lesson was about the Gifts of God's Grace: this Sunday our lesson is about the effects which ought to follow where Grace has been bestowed. Last Sunday represented to us man in the wilderness of this world ready to faint for want of food, and God the Son, in His compassion, first noticing the want and destitution of man, and then feeding him with spiritual nourishment. Now, therefore, man has received the food, and is strengthened for the work that lies before him. He is no more ready to faint by the way, but, in the strength of that meat which has been bestowed upon him, can go onwards towards the Mount of God.

It is at this point that the Gospel for to-day

takes up the description of the Churchman's state. He is to show by the way in which he lives what he has now become; what a change has passed over him. But to teach him this, a new figure is used. He is no more described as a traveller through a wilderness, but as a tree which has become good by being grafted on to a good stock. Of his own nature man was corrupt and bad, but he has been joined to Christ, and has "received of His fulness."* In the words of St. Paul, unregenerate man was like a "wild olive tree," but regenerate man "partakes of the root and fatness of the olive tree;" † draws strength and holiness into his soul from Christ, because he has been grafted into the body of His Church. He has been "now made free from sin," and is able to have his "fruit unto holiness." ‡ It is this holiness, this pure, and devout, and loving life, this life of real obedience to God, and real love towards our neighbour; it is this which shows that God is working in us to will and to do; it is this which will make men confess that God is in us of a truth. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Such is the sign by which our Blessed Lord teaches us to discover whether a prophet, one who professes to come from God, is true or false. "Beware,"

* St. John, i. 16. † Romans, xi. 17. ‡ Romans, vi. 22.

He says, "of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Beware of those who claim to speak in God's name, and wear the outward appearance of being His servants, while in reality they are only seeking their own advantage. "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Their lives will show whether they really come from God or not. I am not going to speak to you now about those who take upon themselves the office of teachers without having been sent by Christ. Something has already been said to you about them on the second Sunday after Easter. I am now going to apply this Gospel to the case of the Churchman. He is, in one sense, "a prophet." It is his bounden duty to instruct men in the ways of God. It is his bounden duty to teach men the love of their Heavenly Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. He is to teach men that God is reconciled to man; that through the Atonement made by Christ our Lord, man can be cleansed from his sin; that, through the indwelling of Christ by His Spirit in his heart, man can be made holy. How is the Churchman to teach this? By his own life. "By their fruits ye shall know them." The world will judge whether he is a true prophet

or a false by watching his ways. When he speaks of God as his Heavenly Father, they will take notice whether he walks before God as an obedient child, not fashioning himself according to the lusts of those who are ignorant of God, but striving to be holy, as He that hath called him is holy. They will take notice whether he is loving, amiable, and gentle towards those who are his brothers, children of God with himself; whether he forbears and forgives others as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven him. If men see the light of the Churchman's good works thus shining before them, then they will believe the truth for which he is a witness, and will glorify his Father which is in Heaven. When the Churchman professes to believe that God the Son has been made the Son of Man that we might be made the sons of God, men will watch whether he sets himself to behave like the Son of God, harmless, and without rebuke. When he declares that Christ was born that we might be born again of His Spirit, men will watch whether the Churchman sets himself against wicked and unholy ways, for "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God;" * in so far as any man is

* 1 St. John, iii. 9.

born of God, and follows the holy influence of God within him, he will never give himself up to sin. When the Churchman declares that Christ has suffered for our sins on the Cross, and is risen again to life, men will watch to see whether he, too, is dead to sin, and risen to newness of life with his Lord. And so, throughout every Article of the Creed, they will judge of the truth of what he believes by seeing what effect it produces upon his life; they will judge the value of the gifts of grace which he has received, by noticing to what account he has turned them. And if they see that he brings forth no fruit unto holiness, they will set him down as a false prophet, and, what is worse, they will reject the faith which he ought to have made them accept and love; "by reason of" him "the way of truth will be evil spoken of."

If, on the other hand, those who watch the faithful member of the Church of Christ, see that there is about his life a higher tone and character than there is in that of the common run of men, then they will receive those fruits for which he is a witness. If they see that he lives not for this world, but for the world to come; that his heart is set on things above; that God is in all his thoughts; that what he does he does for God's sake, that what he

hates he hates because God hates it. If they find him waiting on God, resigned and patient in trouble, cheerful in difficulties, thankful amid blessings; if they observe that he loves others after his measure as God loves him; that he forgives others their offences as he looks to have his own forgiven by God; that he spends on the wants of others what a worldly and a selfish man would spend on himself; that he is meek and quiet where others would be angry and passionate; that he is humble where others would be proud; that he gently gives way where others would stand out stiffly for their rights; if men see such a character as this stamped upon the Churchman, they will know him by his fruits to be a true prophet. They will say of him as they said in old time of his Blessed Master, if we may venture to use the words, "No man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him."* No man could so "hunger and thirst after righteousness;" no man could be so "poor in spirit," so "meek," "merciful," "pure in heart," such a "peacemaker," so true a "mourner" for sin, so patient under persecution.† No man could be so calm, so bright, so loving, so heavenly in mind, and disposition, and word, and act, unless

* St. John, iii. 2.

† St. Matt. v.

he were filled with a strength greater than the strength of man. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" No, indeed, it must be true that God and man are made one. It must be true that Christ dwells in the hearts of those that believe in Him, and that they dwell in Him. It must be true that "he that eateth Christ," even he shall live by Him; that the Saviour does bestow Himself as spiritual food upon the soul to fill it with life, and that those that abide in Him, the same bring forth much fruit. For the corrupt nature of man, left to itself, never could produce such a life of holiness as we have seen in this disciple of Christ. "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." *

* This has been sometimes misinterpreted to favour Manichean, and other false doctrines, such as that the elect cannot sin. The following comment from St. Augustine's Sermon in Mont. ii. 25, may therefore be useful. "From this speech, the Manichees suppose that neither can a soul that is evil be possibly changed for better, nor one that is good into worse, as though it had been, A good tree cannot become bad, nor a bad tree become good; whereas it is thus said, 'A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit,' nor the reverse. The tree is the soul, that is, the man himself; the fruit is the man's works. Therefore, if an evil man would work good things, let him first become good. But as long as he continues evil, he cannot bring forth good fruits. Like, as it is indeed possible, that

Here, then, is the lesson brought before you this Sunday. You have received great gifts from God. In the midst of the trials of this life, God the Son has visited you. He came down and saw that you were "fainting" for want of strength. He had "compassion" on you—mark the word "compassion." He felt with you, felt *for* you, because He had first felt *with* you, being in all points tempted like as you are. He had compassion on you, and fed you with heavenly food, with Himself, who is the Bread of Life. He imparted to you His own Divine Nature. He does make you partaker of that now whenever you faithfully seek Him in the Holy Communion of His Body and Blood. So far we had been taught last Sunday. What next? This: you are to bring forth your fruit unto holiness. There are three things which may stir you up to this.

The first is, the very greatness of the blessing which you have received. For you Christ was born; for you He was given up to die on the Cross; to you He is given continually as the Food of your soul. Through Him the

what was once snow should cease to be so, but it cannot be that snow should be warm; so it is possible that he who has been evil should be so no longer; but it is impossible that an evil man should do good."

Spirit is your constant Guide and Comforter, and through Him, also, God is your reconciled and loving Father. What could have been done more for you that God has not done? When He looks, then, that you should bring forth grapes, will you bring forth wild grapes? When God looks for the fruit of the Spirit from your soul, for "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," "goodness, righteousness, truth," will you bring forth the wild grapes, the fruit that springs from the evil heart of unregenerate man, the corrupt tree? Will you bring forth "the works of the flesh," "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like?" No; surely you will not make such a return for the blessings that have been heaped upon you. Surely you will not so grieve God who has been so rich in mercy towards you. Look at the words of the Epistle for to-day, "Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh." We owe a debt somewhere. But where? Not to the flesh, not to our fallen and corrupted nature. What comes to us from that but trouble, and grief, and strife, and suffering?

When did we ever give way to the evil desires of our weak and sinful hearts, without finding that the fancied enjoyments that they held out before us ended in bitter disappointment and remorse? The flesh would lead us on to "drunkenness, or uncleanness, and lasciviousness," to such foul acts and ways as pollute both body and soul, in a manner that we cannot name in this holy place, and ought scarcely to be able to think of without shame and horror. The flesh will draw us away from God to "idolatry and witchcraft," to put our trust, and take delight in other things than God. The flesh will cloud over the clear light of God's truth, and let us fall into "heresies," vain and conceited notions about the Christian faith, as if we knew it better than the Church. The flesh will darken our minds with all kinds of evil feelings against those with whom we live; dislike, and contention, and envy, and anger, and disobedience. If we live after the flesh, our spirit, with which we should contemplate and adore God, will be debased; our soul, whose affections should be fixed in purity on God and our fellow men, will be filled with all evil passions; our body, which should be used in the service of God, will be steeped in excess and defilement. Nothing but misery is in store for

those who live after the flesh. Nothing but misery has ever come upon us, or any who have in any measure followed its unholy promptings. Let us never take the flesh for our nature, nor bind ourselves to serve it. We owe no debt to it. "We are debtors," indeed, but debtors to God. To *Him* we owe all. From Him we had our first birth into this world, from Him we have every breath we draw, from Him the food that keeps us alive: "in Him we live, and move, and have our being." But we owe Him far more than this. When we were lost through sin, He found and brought us back again from the depths into which we were sunk. When we were dead in sin, He quickened and gave us life. From Him we have our second birth of water and the Spirit: from Him we have the Food which nourishes that second, better, and heavenly Life, the life of holiness, within us. From Him we have the privilege of calling Him Father; the sure promise of His care and protection in this world; the no less sure promise of glory in the world to come. We are indeed debtors to Him, therefore let us give up ourselves to Him, which is all that we have to offer towards the payment of so great a debt. "Let us glorify God with our body and our spirit, which are God's." Let Him have

some fruit from us, such return as we can offer Him, poor though it be, for all the love He has spent, and is spending on us. By the fruit of our lives let it be known what we are, and what He has done for us, that we are His children, and that He has given us His Spirit. We “have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’” Then, as we are the children of God, let us be “about our Father’s business;” let us do our Father’s work, not like those “who have received the spirit of bondage again, to fear;” not like those who are doing an unwelcome task which has been bound upon them; not like slaves who tremble under their master’s anger, and do his work because they dare not shrink from it; but like children who take a delight in obeying their father, and are ready to do anything, little or great, to please Him, because they feel His love, and long to show their love to Him. “Abba, Father, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven;” let that be our prayer, our hope, our aim, our heart’s desire. Here is the first thing to stir us to an earnest, active, holy life—the remembrance of God’s great love to us, and a desire to bring forth fruit in return for that seed of grace which He has sown in our souls.

And the second motive to a holy life springs from the same source. We love God: then we must desire that all others should love Him too. And this, as we have seen, is the very work which is set us, as Churchmen, to teach and lead all others to know and love God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This is the constant prayer of the child of God. "Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," may "all people" "worship" Thee, "serve" Thee, "and obey" Thee "as" they "ought to do." This is what every one of us is to try and bring about by his own life. We are to be known by our fruits. We are so to live and behave that men may be drawn to Christ to gain for themselves what we have gained from Him, to seek that grace for themselves which has brought forth so abundantly in us. There is no book that teaches like a holy life. There is no preaching that goes so home to men's hearts as a good example. It is the only preaching worth anything. "When you say, and do not, you seem to propose to me an impossibility."

And this preaching by example is the Churchman's Apostleship. He is sent forth into the world to bear witness of the truth (not by his words, but by his works,) that all

men may believe. This duty is set before him again and again in Holy Scripture. Not only are we told in general terms to "shine as lights in the world," but this same object is proposed to us in our different callings and relations. "Young women" are to be "chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient, to their own husbands, *that the word of God be not blasphemed.*"* So again, "those who obey not the word are to be won by the conversation," the manner of life, of such wives as live "in subjection to their own husbands."† While servants are exhorted to be obedient, respectful, and honest, for this same reason, "that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."‡

The second thought, then, which may stir you to bring forth fruit into holiness is, that by so doing you are leading souls to God, and helping on that great work of His, the filling His kingdom with those who adore and love Him. Surely it is a great encouragement to remember that even in the common round of your daily duties you may be advancing the Praise of Him Whose Majesty fills heaven and earth. And this is true. Your conduct may cause Christ to be followed, adored, and wor-

* Titus, ii. 5.

† 1 St. Peter, iii. 1.

‡ Titus, ii. 9.

shipped, as much as the praises of the Angels that sing around His throne. Yes! more: for men cannot see how these love our Lord, nor how they bow before Him; but men may see how you love Christ, as they find that you are lowly, gentle, obedient, and submissive, true and faithful for His sake. Men may see what power Christ's love for you has to encourage you to bear all, and to do all, for Him. Men may see what power the grace of Christ has over your souls to conquer what is bad in you, bad tempers, and unholy passions, and selfishness, and worldliness, and so they may learn to love Him Whom you love. Your example may draw them to seek Christ for themselves. You may bring them as you do to kneel at the Foot of that Cross where all love and all holiness is learned, because there hung that Suffering God and Lord, Whose surpassing Love made Him give Himself to die for us, that we might have full and free forgiveness of all our sins, and every gift of grace we need to sanctify our hearts. It may be that in the day of the Joy of your Lord, when the redeemed are gathered safely into His Kingdom of glory, you may be permitted to enter into that joy, to share it, as you find that you have been made the means, by your example, of drawing some who were forgetting Him to

find in Him their Food and Portion by the way, and their Everlasting Rest at last.

There is one other motive to holiness given us, by way of warning, in the Gospel and Epistle, which ought not to be passed over. If thankfulness for God's gifts, and the love of Him, does not urge us to bring forth fruit, then we must needs be told that "every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire."* If the gifts of God's grace are wasted upon us; if we turn them to no account; if God's goodness does not move us to be active in our love to Him; if, in spite of our being partakers of the Divine Nature, we do not give diligence to add to our faith virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and patience, and godliness, and brotherly kindness, and charity; if we lack these things, and are blind, and have forgotten that we were purged from our old sins; if we are barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; *then*, sooner or later, we must be hewn down. Sooner or later we must be cut off from Christ. There is no room in His Church for useless trees, idle and unholy Christians. Long and patiently He bears with them. Often He pleads for them. But, if they continue fruitless, their day must come;

* 2 St. Peter, i. 4-9:

“Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?” is their sentence. There is no room for false prophets among His disciples. He who by a godless life, while he bears the Name of Christ upon him, is deceiving the world into thinking that there is nothing in the Christian religion, that the grace of Christ does not change the heart, he has fallen from his ministry and apostleship, like Judas, and like him must go to “his own place.” “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” These are awful words, brethren, for any of us to hear, if we have by our unholiness caused men to despise Christ; if we have made them doubt whether it could be possible that a person is regenerate in Baptism, because they have seen us still so wicked or so worldly after our Baptism; or, what is still more common, if we have encouraged them to hold back from the Holy Communion, because they have known that we received It, and yet were no better for It. It is an awful thing to have been thus a false prophet preaching against Christ, setting men against Him, His truth, and sacraments.* Most awful of

* “If one will examine somewhat closely, here are two punishments, to be cut down, and to be burned; and he that is burned is also altogether cut out of the kingdom; which is the harder punishment? Many, indeed, fear no more than hell; but I say that the fall of that glory is a far more bitter punishment than

all, to know the end that awaits those who thus waste His grace. "Every" such "tree is hewn down, for ever cut off from Him who is the only Hope and Life of man's soul, for ever separated from Him whose Presence is Peace and Bliss, and cast into that fire, where shall be scorched out the last remnants of Divine Grace, and where every foul passion shall burn into the soul with a devouring flame never to be quenched.

the pains of hell itself. . . . The pain of hell is indeed intolerable, yet are ten thousand hells nothing to falling from that blessed glory, and being held in hate by Christ."—*St. Chrysostom in loc.*

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

TEMPORAL GIFTS.

St. Luke, xvi. 9.

"I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

LAST Sunday the Church showed us in the Epistle that we are debtors, meaning thereby that whatever we have received from God, whether riches, or talents, whether strength of body or strength of mind, whether good dispositions or religious thoughts, these, whatever they may be, cannot be considered as the result or reward of so much work on our part, but that they are so much given, or rather lent, to us by God; and that as we ourselves are not workmen who have received wages, we may not therefore rest upon them; but as we are debtors, to whom has been lent everything which we possess, we have now our debt to pay. The Church then showed us, in the

Gospel for that day, that as we distinguish honest debtors from fraudulent debtors, so we distinguish the faithful from the unfaithful; we do it by their works, not by their promises. An honest debtor may not be able to pay his debts, it is possible, but he is continually doing his utmost to pay them; if he is doing anything less than his utmost, whatever that may be, he is not an *honest* debtor. Here, therefore, is the test. If you would know the true from the false, see what men do with all those good things which have been lent them by God: we do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles; we need not be deceived, therefore, we shall know them by their fruits.

We now go on to this ninth Sunday, and here we are told again, first, that no single Christian man can possibly consider himself in any other light than that of a debtor, because we all have received each his own gifts. "Brethren," says St. Paul in the Epistle, "I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that *all* our fathers were under the cloud, and *all* passed through the Sea, and were *all* baptised unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea, and did *all* eat the same spiritual meat, and did *all* drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ." Now we Christians must be

conscious that every word of this was as true of those whom St. Paul was then addressing, as it was of the Israelites whose type he was then explaining; and that it is as true of everyone of us *now*, as it was of the Christians of St. Paul's own time. Everyone of *us* now is under the cloud, the shadow of God's hand; everyone of us now has passed through the water consecrated by Christ for the washing away of our sins; everyone of us now has been baptised unto our Spiritual Moses, in the Holy Ghost and in the water; and we have *all* eaten the same spiritual meat, and *all* drunk the same spiritual drink, for the rock who follows *us* through *our* wilderness is Christ, who gives us His Body and Blood for our nourishment, even as typically He gave nourishment to the children of Israel in their wilderness.

But this is our righteousness; it is in the power of this that we perform our good works.

That, therefore, which results from these gifts is not our own; it is intrusted to us; we are not owners, we are *stewards*; it is intrusted to us to be used for our Master, and to be dispensed among those in whom our Master takes an interest. In the Gospel the Church shows us the use we are to make of our stewardship, and as in this particular instance the lesson turns rather on those gifts which relate to this

world, which the Evangelist distinguishes as the mammon of unrighteousness, than on those which are of a spiritual nature, we will take these last as our present subject. In the first place, we must remember throughout what we have already shown, that all gifts of every kind are God's gifts, for the whole lesson of the parable is based on this. We admit this readily enough when we think of spiritual help and grace, but we are very apt to consider our money, our rank, our possessions, our influence, as exclusively our own. "May I not do what I please with my own?" there is no more common expression than this: but the answer is easy—Yes, of course you may, if these things are your own, but how came they to be yours; "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." This is just what St. Chrysostom says, "There is a certain false idea, which all men entertain more or less, which increases evil and lessens good; it is the feeling that all the good things which we possess in the course of our life, we possess as lords over them, and accordingly we seize upon them as our own especial goods. But it is quite the contrary, for in this life we are placed not as lords in our own houses, but as strangers led whither we would not; and at a time we think not of he who is rich, may suddenly become a beggar.

Therefore, says he, "whosoever thou art," know thyself to be a dispenser of these things to others, and that the privileges granted them are but for a brief and passing time. Cast away, then, from thy soul the pride of covetousness, and put on the modesty and humility of a steward."

Now if you will call to mind the various passages of Scripture which treat on this subject, you will remember that stewardship, or some situation similiar to it, is always the expression used to signify our possession of anything on this earth; it is the pound intrusted, it is the talent committed to our keeping, it is the vineyard let out to husbandmen. The invariable idea is that of men holding or occupying that which is not their own, but for which, nevertheless, they are accountable.

But the most common expression of all is, the word stewardship. Part of our stewardship is "the mammon of unrighteousness," which simply means this world's goods, and not necessarily goods unrighteously obtained. "They are so called," Augustine says, "to distinguish them from the true riches. All the riches of this world are full of poverty, and are ever liable to chances. If they were the true riches which were spoken of afterwards, they would give you security."

But this gift, mammon of unrighteousness as it is, and often used as it is for unrighteous purposes, may yet be used in God's Service, and *must* be used in God's Service, if God should have committed it to our keeping.

The parable of the Unjust Steward, which explains this, has been thought a difficult one. People say, how is it the lord commends the steward for being unjust? how is it that he tells us to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, which they imagine to mean, make the mammon of unrighteousness our friend?

Now that is just what the Lord does not mean. He neither commends the steward for being unjust, nor does he tell us to love our riches; this last mistake is made by overlooking the word "of," which in this case, as in many others, means "by,"—as when we say, taught *of* God, meaning taught *by* God. "I will show you," he says, "how to make friends. You may make them even by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, by means of your worldly riches; and real friends, too, not friends who can receive you into their houses only, as the steward in the parable hoped to be received, but friends who can receive you into *everlasting* habitations—God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the only friends whose habitations are everlasting."

Neither does the lord commend the steward for being unjust; he commends "the unjust steward," the man, that is, who is designated as The Unjust Steward. He was not unjust from anything that appears in the parable, but he was a man who had already been accused of having wasted his lord's goods; it is for this that he is called the unjust steward, and not for those acts for which his lord was commending him.

But the acts which the lord was commending *were* unjust, we say; the steward was making friends for himself by defrauding his master. Not at all; this mistake arises from our not considering the customs of the East; it arises from our estimating a steward by what we should call a steward here in England. A steward here is a man who receives wages, and whose office and business it is to look over accounts, and to keep a balance of receipts and payments, so that his employer should not be defrauded of his due. If such a man were to tell his lord's tenants to falsify their bills, he would be committing an act of gross dishonesty which no one could commend, and which would be very far from making friends even of those who were dishonest enough to profit by it.

The Eastern steward is a very different

character. The lords of the soil there are petty chieftains rather than landed proprietors, their tenants are not like ours, men who pay rents, but vassals, who render tribute, a hundred measures of wheat, or a hundred measures of oil, according to their assessment. The steward is a man who makes to the lord of the soil a certain fixed payment for the privilege of farming this tribute; it is his lord's tribute certainly, but all that he can make by it is honestly his own. We have nothing like this in England, unless it be the man who farms the tolls of a gate or bridge, but that is almost the invariable way of arranging the multifarious tributes of the East.

These stewards are often managers of the household, or of public works, or of other things, as well as contractors. In this capacity the unjust steward had been accused to his lord, and for maladministration in this had been discharged. His object is to make friends, he therefore does not exact all that is due to him, he makes presents; to one he gives back fifty measures of oil, to another twenty measures of wheat; not his master's oil and his master's wheat, although it had come to him as his lord's tribute, but his own property, that which he had contracted for, and paid for, and might keep or give back or

put to such use as he pleased. His lord saw the use he made of the wealth which had passed into his hands, and he commended him, not for his injustice, that was merely a circumstance in the parable, that was merely a means of accounting for the steward's being placed in such a situation as to require friends, but for his wisdom; what his lord said, was, You are wise, you have acted rightly, you have made good use of your riches, you have made these people your friends by means of your acquired wealth, it is much better than spending it all on yourself, and "doing as you pleased with your own."

So far the parable; and now our Lord Jesus Christ makes His own observations on His own story. The first is, that "in their generation" the children of this world are wiser than the children of light. The story you have heard, He would say, is nothing strange to you; it is a thing you see done every day. When anyone wants any of the things of this world, he uses the best and likeliest means of obtaining them. If he does say This is *my* wealth, which I may use as I please, still he does not please to spend it on himself, or on his pleasures. If he wants friends, he uses it so as to make friends. "The Steward who was cast out of the Stewardship,"

says Augustine, "is commended because he provided himself against the future, instead of spending his wealth on the present. Now this is very often the case with those whose thoughts are employed on the things of this world. Very frequently men order their matters prudently, and set themselves to work busily, in order that they may have a refuge for their old age; they are wise, therefore, *in their generation*, they are wise in adapting their means to the end they have in view. But this is not the case with the children of light, with those who profess to seek in Heaven a refuge for their eternity. Wise as their choice may have been, they follow up the profession they have chosen like fools; they take no forethought for the things of God; they do not adapt their means to the end that they propose; in their generation, therefore, after their kind, so far as their knowledge goes, or their desires prompt them, the children of this world are wiser than the children of light.

"And I say unto you," said our Lord, turning to those who were children of light, "imitate this, yours is only a stewardship, not an abiding possession; it is a possession that you may be deprived of any day, and you cannot say you have been profitable servants; you have had the farming of your Lord's goods,

His talents, His earthly wealth, the riches of His heavenly grace; you know that you have wasted these goods; if you look into your own consciences and compare them with your past lives, you must know that you have wasted what God has given you; you know that the time must come when the Lord will call you, when you will die, and must give up your stewardship; you know that at His call every man will rise from the dead, and stand before Him, and that He will say to each one of us, give an account of thy stewardship. What will you say? You feel conscious that you have wasted His goods, and that your stewardship will not bear examination; you cannot now begin to dig, since the time for work is over, and you are ashamed to beg for that which you *know* you have not deserved. What will you do? *Then*, nothing; it will be too late then, but you may do something *now*; call together your Lord's debtors, call together those who, like yourself, have received of the Lord's bounty, though not indeed, it may be, in so great a measure as you have received it. Impart this bounty to them; if they are hungry and you are full, feed them; if they are sick and you are in health, tend them; if they are in prison, tied and bound with the chain of their sins, and you are at freedom, visit them; if

they are ignorant, and you are wise and learned, teach them. The hundred measures of oil, and the hundred measures of wheat are yours, nobody denies it; but you have to give an account of your stewardship in a great many other things which are *not* yours. Use, therefore, these things, which after all come originally from your Lord's tribute and not from your own private property, so as to make yourselves friends. You will need them when you come to have your own accounts examined.

What! friends of those who are poorer, weaker, more ignorant, more bound by their sins than we are ourselves? Yes, truly. Gregory says rightly, "If after death you would find something in your own hand, before your death place your riches in the hands of the poor," and so of your learning, and so of your virtues, and so of every gift that God has given you. Often and often it happens that what we keep we lose, what we spend we waste, what we give we have.

But how can such friends profit us? Evidently they are more in want than we are, how can they help us?

Do you forget that blessed saying, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of

these My brethren, ye have done it unto ME." These are not the men of whom you may make friends; you may; men do meet with instances of love and gratitude on earth sometimes, but not often, not generally; it was not very much of either that fell to the share of the greatest Benefactor the earth ever saw; but these are not the friends you make by a right use of the mammon of unrighteousness; these cannot receive you into everlasting habitations. Who can? Who alone can? Who but the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, into whose Name ye have been baptised? "Thus, then," says Cyril, "Christ taught those who abound in riches earnestly to have friendship with the poor, and to have treasure in Heaven." ... Now Our Lord opens to us the eye of the heart, explaining what He had said, and adding, "If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? That which is least is the mammon of unrighteousness, that is, earthly riches, which seem nothing to those that are heavenly-wise. I think then," he continues, "that a man is faithful in a little when he imparts aid to those who are bowed down with sorrow. If then, we have been unfaithful in this little thing, how shall we obtain from hence the true riches, that is, the true gift of

divine grace, impressing the image of God on the soul? If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, (another man's, inasmuch as it was the stewardship intrusted to you for the sake of others,) who shall give you that which is your own," that Divine grace that mainly and primarily benefits yourself? Riches, earthly riches, the mammon of unrighteousness, neither are ours nor can be ours, except as a trust, except as that which is another man's; if we do keep them as long as we remain in this world, we must die, and leave our riches to others, and if we have not been faithful over those riches which cannot profit us in themselves, but only in proportion as we use them well, who shall give us that that really will abide with us and be our own, our own not in this world only, but our own to carry with us in the world to come; our own to keep, not through time only, but through eternity, our own in heaven, as well as our own on earth.

God grant us these riches, which in this world will enable us to do always such things as are rightful, so that we, who without Him cannot do anything that is good, may by Him be enabled to live after His will, while in the world to come they will procure us that reward which shall never

fail them who live after it in this life, the love of Him who shall "come quickly," and "whose reward shall be with Him to give to every man according as his work shall be."

H.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

1 Cor. xii. 1, 2.

“Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.”

WE learn from the Gospel of this Sunday that the Lord went into the Temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; and we find that those people whom He cast out were the dealers in the animals required for the sacrifices, so that their traffic was authorised by the Priests. It is a singular thing that a Man without any visible authority should have been able to do this, and that those who were buying and selling under the authority of the Priests, should have obeyed so readily One who seemed no more than a private individual.

No doubt there must have been here some assumption or manifestation of Divine Power of which we are not told. There could be

no doubt of our Lord's ability to do it if He pleased, but the singular thing is, that He who was always very careful to uphold the authority of the Priests, who had Himself told the people to do all that the Scribes and Pharisees bade them do, for no other reason than because these Scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' seat, should on this occasion have acted so contrary to His usual habit. And when we see that this miracle, for miracle it is, occurs twice during our Lord's ministry, once at the beginning, and once at the end of it, we begin to suspect that there must be some deep doctrinal meaning in it which requires to be sought for.

Very possibly the interpretation put upon this transaction by St. Cyril of Alexandria is the true one, that "in casting out the buyers and sellers of sacrificial animals in His Temple, He would intimate that types and shadows were then passing away, especially when we find that, as soon as He had banished them, He himself began to teach there." Possibly, also, there may be truth in the interpretation of Gregory, that it implied the necessity of ejecting the corrupt, and of maintaining strictness of discipline, before it was possible for us to receive the gift of grace. Either interpretation of this passage would be in accordance

with what St. Paul says to the Corinthians, in that portion of his Epistle which the Church has coupled with this Gospel on the Tenth Sunday after Trinity. "Ye know," he says, "that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. You were then not fit even to receive the teaching of Christ, but now you are fit, the polluted temple has been cleansed. Now, therefore, the Ambassador of Christ may be heard in it, even as Christ Himself taught in the Temple after He had cast out that which had made His Father's House a den of thieves; now then, that I can call you brethren, concerning spiritual gifts I would not have you ignorant, as he had said before to the Athenians, "the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commands He all men everywhere to repent."

And so I say to you, it is because you have now more light from the Holy Ghost than men had of olden time, it is because you have cast away the works of darkness, it is because Christ, through His Ambassadors, teaches daily in the temple, but "concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant."

The teaching of this day's Gospel and Epistle is very much like that of last Sunday's, only a step in advance of it; that treated of material gifts, this treats of spiritual.

That of last Sunday related exclusively to temporal advantages and privileges, of riches, power, position in society, influence of rank or office. All of these are comprehended under the term "the mammon of unrighteousness," because all these are objects in themselves worldly, and such as can be appreciated and understood by the children of this world as well as by the children of the Light. These, we were told, may be, and ought to be, used in God's service; the mammon of unrighteousness may itself be sanctified if so used; and when so sanctified it will procure us Friends, who will receive us into everlasting habitations.

We now treat of gifts which come more immediately and directly from God. These the children of this world cannot appreciate, and do not value or care for; this lesson, therefore, is not addressed to them, but to those from out of whose temple, the temple of their bodies, the Lord Christ has cast out the things of this world, and they are taught the same lesson with respect to spiritual things which all were taught last Sunday with respect to worldly things. The spiritual gifts are to be used in the service of God; "the *manifestation* of the Spirit, that which now begins to be manifest to your minds as being the Gift of

the Spirit, is given to every man to profit withal."

Now this manifestation of the Spirit means very much more than what we call intellectual gifts, such as talent, and genius, and skill, and eloquence, and the power of teaching and convincing and explaining; it means these, but it comprehends also things much less appreciable by the world. Moral qualities, qualities which even the possessors of them hardly consider as gifts, such as kindness, benevolence, patience, perseverance, energy, resignation; these, too, are really God's gifts, and in proportion as worldly thoughts have been cast out from us, we shall understand them to be God's gifts; and if the mammon of unrighteousness may be used in God's service and so sanctified, much more may these, which are the direct inspiration of Heaven, and gifts which may be exercised there as well as on earth.

Evidently we are now treating of a higher order of gifts. In the passage which follows last Sunday's Gospel, our Lord alludes to something still higher, of which He has yet to speak. If you have not been faithful, He says, in the unrighteous mammon, who shall commit to your trust *the true riches*? If you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, inasmuch as wealth, and, still more, office and

influence are after all not your own, but a stewardship expressly for the benefit of others; if you have not been faithful even in this, who shall commit to you that which is especially *your own*, endowments of your own minds, that which is part of yourself? "That which is least," says Cyril, "is the mammon of unrighteousness, earthly riches, which seem nothing to the heavenly wise." "I think, then," he continues, "that a man is faithful in a little thing when he imparts aid to those who are bowed down with sorrow; and if we have been unfaithful in this little thing, how shall we obtain from hence the true riches? These are the fruitful gifts of divine grace impressing the Image of God on the human soul." "Riches," says St. Ambrose, "are foreign to us, because they are something beyond our nature, they are not born with us, they do not pass away with us into our graves; but Christ is our *own*, because He is the Life of man."

These are the gifts of which the Apostle would not have us ignorant, and, therefore, in the Epistle of this day, he proceeds to explain them.

The very first point of difference which strikes us is, that these, unlike the gifts of worldly precedence, are all essentially one. There may be diversities of gifts, but the same

spirit; this one and the same spirit is *manifested* in a different manner in different men, since differently constituted minds not only need different apportionments of grace to fit them for working out their own salvation, but they require different applications of it in order to adapt them for the different services which God recognises of them in this world, and for the furtherance of His kingdom upon earth. Still the doctrine is, whatever these several manifestations may be, whether Wisdom, or Knowledge, or Faith, or Healing, or Miracles, or Prophecy, or Discerning of Spirits, or Tongues, or Interpretation of Tongues, or whatever there may be in our times corresponding with these, it is the self-same Spirit working in all, but dividing to every man severally as He will.

This is a matter which requires some little explanation before we can understand the Epistle of the day, so as to adapt it to our own case and our own times. St. Chrysostom, confessing that the whole passage is very obscure, says, that "this obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to, and by their cessation, they being such as used to occur, but such as now no longer take place."

Of these facts we will give his own explanation, condensing that which is too dif-

fuse. "Whoever was baptised," he says, "straightway spake with tongues, and not with tongues only, but many prophesied, and some also performed many wonderful works." This is called a manifestation of the Spirit, because the Spirit was Himself invisible, but this made it manifest to them, even that were without, that it was the Spirit speaking in this very person. As the Apostles had received this sign first, so the faithful continued to receive it, and the sign showed itself not only in the gift of tongues, but many other gifts; some men used to raise the dead, some to cast out devils, some to perform other wonders. But of these gifts some had less and some more, and this became to them a cause of division, not from its own nature, but from the perverseness of them who had received it; in that, on the one hand, the possessors of the greater gifts were lifted up over them that had the lesser, and these again were grieved, and envied the owners of the greater." The very same scandal seems to have occurred in Rome also, and to have originated that passage in St. Paul's Epistle to that church, which, under the parable of the body, and the more or less honourable members, teaches the same lesson.

To all these he says, and says it through the grace given unto him, "to every man that

is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the *measure* of faith."

"Now," he says, "there are diversities of gifts; there must be, because there are diversities of offices. But why are you envious one of another? why are you cast down because you cannot do so much—so you think—in God's service as another? The whole is a gift, not anything that you have earned, and even if you are made inferior in the measure of that which has been given thee, thou art equal in this, that thou hast received thy honour from the same Source." "Thou canst not say that God Himself bestowed the gift on another, but sent it to thee by an angel. If, therefore, there be a difference in the gift, there is no difference in the Giver. From the same Fountain ye are drawing, both thou and he."

The rule which St. Chrysostom would lay down is this, that not only every gift is from God, but that every gift is a stewardship, as if God, having a certain purpose to effect, the happiness, namely, of His whole people, both in this world and in the world to come, and who might have endowed each one of them severally with that precise amount of gifts, temporal and spiritual, which was necessary

to effect this purpose, chose rather to take His whole people for His fellow-workers, and to endow us all with these gifts, only in different measures, so that each has something wanting to his perfect happiness, and something superabundant; something to receive, and something to impart. It is evident, therefore, that each has some part of another's happiness (or, in other words, some portion of God's work,) placed in his hands, and thus, in the imparting of these gifts which he has himself received, every man becomes a steward of God's grace.

This he urges, first, as a ground for dismissing at once envy and jealousy. The equal distribution of the whole of these gifts is necessary for perfect happiness, so that, if any portion be left out, God's purpose is not yet effected, who, then, can say that his own stewardship is of less importance than that of another? or who can boast that he is of more importance than any other in God's general scheme, since all are necessary for its completion. All that is necessary for our own hopes of participating in the ultimate and perfect happiness which will be accomplished in heaven, is the assurance that we have still the Spirit of God. Now these gifts, whatever they be, are a manifestation of the Spirit, and "though there be a difference of gifts, yet the evidence is one,

since whether thou hast much or little thou art equally manifest, so that if thou desirest to show that thou hast the Spirit thou hast sufficient demonstration."

"Wherefore," he sums up, "now that both the Giver is one, and the thing given a pure favour, and the manifestation takes place thereby, and this is more profitable for thee, grieve not as if despised or overlooked; for not to dishonour hath God done it, nor to declare thee inferior to another, but to spare thee, and with a view to thy welfare. To receive more than one has ability to bear is rather unprofitable and injurious, and a fit cause for dejection."

"For"—here comes in the second point—"the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal;" it is not a distinction, it is a duty; it is not a precedence over others conferred upon us by God, it is a something to be done in God's service, which God, having tried us, and knowing our capabilities, calls on us to do.

To one He has given the word of wisdom, the power of making a wise choice, of seeing at once the bearing of any action in this world upon the happiness of the next. Is not this a stewardship just as much as the temporal gifts of which we spoke last Sunday? Is it not, I

mean, a gift, of which we, indeed, may profit ourselves, but which may be imparted and used for the benefit of others? When Peter was strengthened, did he not strengthen his brethren? When Paul's eyes were opened to the light of Christ, did he not immediately point out how he had himself been turned from his error, and "straightway preach Christ in the synagogues that he was the Son of God?"

To another He gave the word of knowledge, the understanding of His mysteries, and is not this a stewardship? did not the Spirit, who had given this gift to Philip, move him that he should run and join himself to him who was in spiritual difficulties, and to say unto him, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" and when he said, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" to begin at the same Scriptures, and to preach to him Jesus?

To another He gave the Spirit of Faith. This does not mean here the faith of doctrine, but the faith of miracles; that faith of which Christ spoke, when He said, "If ye have it as a grain of mustard-seed ye shall say to this mountain, Remove, and it shall remove." It is the impression, the firm confidence, that an act, to man impossible, can be effected by our hands; such faith as that whereby Paul in-

flicted blindness on Elymas, and Peter death on Ananias.

Or, again, that which is analogous to the last, the gift of healing; as when Peter, with John, fastening his eyes on the lame man, bade him, "*In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk,*" feeling, at the time, a confidence that the same power resided in them which they had seen exerted by their Master.

These two gifts are evidently a stewardship, and, therefore, a duty; they are given to us to profit withal, to be used for the benefit of others, and, exclusively in Christ's service, for the purpose not only of doing them temporal good, but of inspiring in them the same confidence in the power of God as that with which we are actuated ourselves. And let none of us think that because the power of blinding heretics, or slaying infidels, or healing the faithful of their natural and temporal diseases has ceased, therefore this gift has ceased also. Many are the works of Christ lying before us, even at our doors, which worldly men, who weigh possibilities by the powers of this world, would pronounce impracticable and visionary, but into which the faithful will cast themselves in full confidence of success, and will succeed in. These may not be more faithful than

others in matters of doctrine, but they have the gift of faith, the gift of confidence in themselves and their own powers. This is a gift from God, and a very great gift it is. Men should pray for it, and whenever they feel it, they should use it as it was used by Peter, and James, and John, in the service of their Master.

To another He has given prophecyings. In no time was this gift universal, or even common—it was given to a few, but to be used by them for the benefit of all. Shall we say that it has ceased now, and that this portion of the Epistle is no longer applicable to the Family of Christ? No portion of Scripture ever becomes obsolete; every part is applicable to every time, if we will only learn how to apply it. If we imagine that this gift has ceased, it is that we confine its meaning to foretelling, while the Apostles used it in a much wider sense. It is the power of preaching; it is the power of setting forth the mysteries of God's Word, and placing them before men, so that their future lives will be affected and overruled by what we say. This is a gift of God, a rare gift, but not more rare now than it was then. So, also, is the power of discerning Spirits; the power of knowing who is spiritual and who is not; who is a prophet and who a deceiver, as

when St. Peter says to the Thessalonians, "Despise not prophecyings, but, *proving* all things, hold fast by that which is good." Is not this a stewardship? is not this given to profit withal? is the power of discriminating, and persuading, and convincing, to be neglected? or to be used upon ourselves only?

To another He gives divers kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. These, perhaps, are gifts, which, if we take them in their literal sense, we might say have ceased with the occasion which called them forth. There is now no reason why unlearned men should go forth to teach all nations, because learning itself is open to all who need it. But taking it in its full sense, these gifts have not ceased, nor ever will cease. Has not God given to men the gift of learning? All have not to the same amount the power of acquiring it when placed before them, just as all had not, in those times, the gift of tongues; but has not God given it to many? I do not mean only the power of acquiring the languages now spoken, but the comprehension of those in which the Holy Scriptures were originally written; and what is this but "tongues," and the "interpretation of tongues?" St. Paul calls it "doctrine." "Give attendance," he writes to Timothy, "to

reading, to exhortation, to *doctrine*; neglect not the gift that is in thee." He calls it a gift, and it is a gift; but whatever be the amount of it, as it is a gift of God, so it is a stewardship, a gift entrusted to us for the benefit of others; and, therefore, he who keeps it to himself alone, is neglecting his duty, and is guilty of the same amount of selfishness as he who keeps for his own exclusive use his stewardship in the "mammon of unrighteousness."

The same amount of selfishness, the same amount of neglect, but a far greater sin, inasmuch as the gift entrusted has been greater, is incurred by him who wastes his spiritual gifts. In one sense, everything that we have is a gift of God, but more immediately are the gifts of the Spirit gifts of God, for they were given to us when we first became members of Christ, and were enlarged to us when we, with our own lips, before God and the congregation, ratified and confirmed the promises made for us when we first received them. Then, by the reception of these gifts, which themselves are attributes of Christ, we became participators in His nature, and consequently in His work on earth.

We have not each of us *all* the attributes of Christ, or we should be as Christ, but as in

the Old Testament, Abraham, and Isaac, and Joseph, and Moses, and Joshua, and David, and Solomon, were all true types of Christ, but none of them complete types; as Abraham represented the Sacrificer, Isaac the Sacrifice, Joseph the Mediator, Moses the Lawgiver, Joshua the Conqueror, David Christ Militant, Solomon Christ Triumphant, and all of them together the perfect Christ, so is it now; we who have received Christ's spiritual gifts are types of Christ, not perfect types, any more than His servants of old time were perfect types, but collectively we exhibit the several attributes which together represent the perfect Christ, for collectively we are the Holy Catholic Church, which is His Bride.

But, as we find Abraham, and Isaac, and Joseph, and Moses, and Joshua, and David, and Solomon exhibiting each his own type by doing each his own duty, without envying or coveting the type entrusted to the others, so ought we; as we find no comparison in the Scripture as to whether Abraham, or Moses, or David, was the greater, so there is no comparison among Christ's types now. He who exhibits his own type is a faithful servant; he who does not exhibit it is cast aside as unfit for the purpose for which he was selected, and this is the whole distinction. In the Gospel

we find the father dividing to those who are represented as his sons, so, in this day's Epistle we find the Spirit "dividing to every man severally as He will." It is not for us to choose how we will represent our Lord, sufficient for us that we do represent Him. "Let us not, I pray you," says St. Chrysostom, "bewilder ourselves, neither let us grieve, saying, Why have I received this? and Why have I not received that? neither let us demand an account of the Holy Spirit. For if thou knowest that He vouchsafed it from providential care, consider that from the same care He hath given also the measure of it. Be content, and rejoice in what thou hast received, but murmur not at what thou hast not received; yea, rather confess God's favour that thou hast not received things beyond thy power."

But if we do believe that we have become fellow-workers with Christ, let us work with Him, and that not from fear, but from love; not because we remember the sentence passed on him who had buried his talent in the earth, though that sentence is repeated again in the Gospel of this day, and pictured to us in the destruction of that city who had known her Lord's work, and had not done it, "who had received the law by the disposition of angels,

and had not kept it;" not because we dread the punishment, but because we consider the very fellowship as an honour and a happiness, wholly irrespective of any future reward. Let us do it because the more we do Christ's work, the more we feel ourselves one with Him.

And when we do think of the reward, it is of a far higher nature than that held out in last Sunday's Gospel. The Friends which we make by a right use of the mammon of unrighteousness will receive us into everlasting habitations; but something greater than this is held out to those who use rightly their spiritual gifts, as by typifying Christ, by setting forth Christ on earth, by letting our light, the reflected Light of Heaven, shine before men; we have entered into the work of Christ here, so we shall enter into the Triumph of Christ hereafter. There is far more implied in the exulting welcome of the good and faithful servants than the mere reception of them into everlasting habitations; it is more, even, than "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things;" it is the very highest blessing that redeemed and sanctified human nature is capable of receiving; it is "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord; be partaker of thy Lord's Triumph."

H.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

PRIDE AND HUMILITY.

St. Luke, xviii. 14.

“Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

A HYPOCRITE is one who pretends to be that which he is not; one who hides his real character under an outward appearance, with the intention of passing current as really being that which he appears. As a class, this was pre-eminently true of the Pharisees. If instances of this hypocrisy were wanting in the records of the New Testament, which they are not, we should be fully justified in ascribing this character to them when we remember the sevenfold denunciation of our Blessed Lord, “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.” They were whited sepulchres, fair to all outward seeming, nay, beautiful and attractive, but inwardly they were full of rottenness and corruption.

However true this was of the Pharisees as a class, we must bear in mind what was said on the Sixth Sunday after Trinity, and not hastily conclude that every individual of that class was a hypocrite in the above sense. You will remember that on that occasion we said that "the Pharisees were men who endeavoured to lead a stricter life than their neighbours;" that as a class they affected a higher standard of holiness; that the lives of many of that class, without doubt, were more strict and holy than those of their neighbours. Had there not been strict and holy men in the truest sense of the word among that class, there would have been no base imitators; the counterfeit always following, and at the same time being a proof of the real. Had there not been in the ranks of the Pharisees many a Saul, a Joseph, and a Gamaliel, that sect would scarce have been highly esteemed for its sanctity and holiness, and consequently have offered but few inducements to the crafty and designing, who to gain their ends were content to assume the external restraint of the sect, and bask in the sunshine of popularity among the "religious world" of the day. And you will remember that we remarked, that by looking upon every Pharisee as a hypocrite, we should

lose entirely the meaning of the Gospel for the day. That observation which was true of the Gospel for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity is equally true, and not less necessary to be borne in mind when contemplating the Gospel for this day.

We were told last Sunday that the manifestation of the Spirit was given to every man to profit withal. Now the possession of this gift on the part of every baptised Christian, exposes him to one or the other of these two dangers; he is in danger either of neglecting, despising, and setting at nought that gift, or from the consciousness of possessing it, he is in danger of nourishing and sustaining spiritual pride, forgetting the Source from whence his gifts came, and regarding his endowments as essential parts of his own nature. He is in danger either of being totally indifferent to the talents entrusted to him, or of trusting in *himself* that he is righteous. Of the former danger the Church warned us last Sunday, when she taught each one of us to apply to himself, in a more limited, yet in a deeper sense, those tender and thrilling words of our Lord regarding Jerusalem, "If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hidden from

thine eyes!" She draws a comparison between Jerusalem, the chosen and favoured city, with its Temple, in which dwelt the visible presence of Jehovah, and the baptised Christian, whose body is consecrated to be the Temple of the Holy Ghost. She draws a comparison between this Jerusalem, careless of its privileges, indifferent to its blessings, regardless of God's mercies, and setting at nought God's warnings, and the careless and indifferent Christian; and in deep anxiety, addresses him with the words uttered by her Divine Master, "If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day the things which belong to thy peace," hoping, it may be, even against hope, that it is not yet too late, trusting that the things which belong to his peace may not yet be hidden from his eyes.

So much for last Sunday. To-day the Church turns to another class, who do not need warning the less because they are fully alive to the vocation wherewith they have been called, and warns them against spiritual pride, while at the same time she enforces the virtue of humility; and her lesson to us this day is this, that in proportion to the manifestation of the Spirit in us, in that proportion should we manifest in ourselves deep and profound humility.

Let us first consider the warning as exhibited in the Gospel for this day. We have brought forward for our consideration a Pharisee and a Publican going up to the Temple to pray; and we find that the Publican, who acknowledged his sinfulness, was justified, while the Pharisee, who pleaded his righteousness, was not justified. Why is this? I say "his righteousness," because we must take the Pharisee's estimate of himself to be a true one, as far as it goes, and we must not regard him as a consummate hypocrite in the usual meaning of that word. The Pharisee, then, of the Parable, was one who would bear comparison with many around, and be found to be superior to them. He was not unjust, he was not an extortioner, he was not an adulterer; and when we remember the social and moral anarchy of the Jewish nation in our Lord's time, we at once allow that a man in those days to be neither unjust, nor an extortioner, nor adulterer, was to attain a very high standard of morality. So far, then, in his relation to his neighbours, his acts were right. But this is not all. He fasted twice in the week, and gave tithes of all he possessed. And this, too, was right; these, too, were things that he ought to have done, and he did them. And doubtless his fasts were strict, and his

tithes were measured out with honest exactness. How is it that all this which was right and good failed to bring to this Pharisee a blessing? How was it that he did not go to his house justified? Because, when he came up to the Temple to present himself before God, it was not to consider how he stood with regard to God, but how he stood with regard to others around him. It is true that he was not unjust, nor an extortioner, nor an adulterer, but he forgot that the virtues of justice, honesty, and purity, arose not from himself, but from the use of God's gifts to him; and consequently we do not find that he thanks God for enriching him with such gifts, neither do we find that he prays for the continuance or the increase of these gifts. It is true that he thanks God, but it is not because that by these gifts God has made him just, honest, and pure, but because he is not as other men are. He looks upon the gulf, great as it is, which separates him from the grovelling and degraded beings around him, but he forgets to look upon the gulf, greater, infinitely greater as it must be, which separates him from God; or if he thinks at all, thinks that at all events it may be easily spanned by the bridge of his perfections. He arrogantly supposes that his rigorous fasts and his scrupulous accuracy

in the matter of tithes, place him on so high a level with regard to God, as not only to free him from all rebuke, not only to free him from any obligation to God, but even to afford him just and solid ground to look for at God's hands that acceptance which he considers due to his merit, and claims it as his right. But this is not all. The Pharisee exhibits feelings of exultation at the depravity of those around him. We do not find him expressing any sorrow for, or interceding in behalf of those who are unjust, extortioners, and adulterers; we do not find that he prays that they may become just, and honest, and pure. What does it matter to him that others are unjust extortioners, and adulterers, so long as he is not like them, or even like his fellow-worshipper, the Publican; nay, the more there are unjust, extortioners, and adulterers, the higher does it exalt him, the greater contrast does it give to his virtues. And thus he looks upon the sins around him only as subjects for his self-exaltation, and on the sinners as objects for his contempt.

Now let us consider the other worshipper in the Temple, the Publican. In the first place, I would premise that, as far as his outward life and moral standard were concerned, he was the Pharisee's equal. This is mani-

festly intended to be so, because we are called upon to ponder on the cause why, between two men equal in all respects, one is nevertheless accepted, and the other rejected. The Publican, then, is neither unjust, an extortioner, nor an adulterer; he, too, fasts twice a week, and gives tithes of all he possesses; he, too, is just in his life, honest in his dealings, pure in his conduct; he, too, is careful to submit to the discipline of his creed, and scrupulous in setting apart of his substance to God. But in what language do we find him speaking of himself? There is in his case no "God, I thank Thee," but only, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." And why is this? Because, when he comes up to the Temple to present himself before God, his only thought is, how he stands with regard to God. What are his justice and honesty, strict as they are, to the infinite justice, the infinite honesty of the Almighty Jehovah before Whom he stands? What is his purity, free from stain as it is, to the infinite purity of Him in Whose sight even the stars are not pure, and Who chargeth His angels with folly? Bright as is his character, what is it at the best but the brightness of reflection? He knows and feels that the source of light is not in himself, and can only see that even the brilliancy of the

reflected rays are weakened, dispersed, and distorted by his own carelessness, negligence, and wilfulness. Had he done *all*, he knew that even then he would but have done his duty; but *had* he done all? if not, how could he invite Jehovah to enter into judgment with him? how could he abide the issue of a judgment of infinite justice? what avail to him in that judgment would be his justice, honesty, and purity, such as they were? And, therefore, he feels that his fitting position is "afar off," his natural posture is with eyes downcast, his suitable action is to smite his breast; the only words that he can utter are, "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

"Look here upon this picture, and on this

The counterfeit presentment of two brothers."

Two portraits are they; at first sight equally exhibiting the human form as to perfection, but as we gaze we find the expression of the eyes are different; we are attracted by the winning softness of the one, while we recoil and shudder at the sinister harshness of the other. Two beautiful flowers are they; one, however, emits the delicious fragrance of humility; the other, the nauseous odour of spiritual pride. Both the Pharisee and the Publican had had equal gifts conferred on them, equal talents entrusted to them; each

had equally used his gifts, and traded with his talents; the produce of the one, however, was rejected, that of the other was accepted. The Pharisee was condemned because he "trusted in *himself*." The Publican was justified because he "trusted in *God*."

This is the warning voice of the Church to-day. While she tells every baptised child of hers that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to him to profit withal—as she did last Sunday—she bids us this day study well the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, and bring it home to our hearts; and warns us to take heed lest the things that would have been for our health, should be to us an occasion of falling.

But it may be asked, "Is not our position under the Gospel very different from that of the Jew under the Law? Is there not that in the dispensation of the New Covenant which justifies a greater reliance upon what we are, and what we do, as being meritorious in God's sight?" Verily our position is different. In comparison with the gift imparted to every baptised person, all the accumulated gifts of the Old Dispensation dwindle into insignificance, and fade into obscurity. But lest we should thence be led to infer that that which was culpable in the Pharisee is right in

the Christian, however it may be modified, the Church in her Epistle for to-day would lead us to study well the character of one who ranks among the chiefest of the Apostles. The Epistle contains a summary of the knowledge which St. Paul had of the mystery of godliness. But how did he receive this knowledge? not from man, as he himself states on another occasion, but by the direct revelation of Jesus Christ was he taught it. And who among us can boast, with truth, that we have been entrusted with direct and visible revelations from God? And if we be tempted to boast at what we do, or have done, what are our works in comparison to those of St. Paul? The Churches of Ephesus and Corinth, Philippi and Laodicea, Antioch, Thessalonica, and Rome, testified the zeal with which he laboured to extend Christ's kingdom, while Gaul, Spain, and Britain, exhibit traces in what has come down to us of the same master-builder. If we talk of self-sacrifice and self-denial, what are they? where are our stripes, prisons, deaths, our perils of waters, perils of robbers, perils from countrymen, perils from heathen, perils in the city, the sea, and the wilderness? where are our weariness and painfulness, watchings and fastings, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness? and all

for Christ's sake, and the furtherance of His kingdom. And yet, with all this, how does St. Paul speak of himself? We shall ever find in what he says very little of the spirit of the Pharisee, though very much of that of the Publican, deeper, however, and stronger in proportion to the richness of his gifts, and the extent of his privileges. The Epistle contains striking instances of this, though they are but samples, choice samples it may be, of the spirit which pervades his writings and pervaded his life. He esteems himself the "least of the Apostles;" aye, not even "meet to be called an Apostle." What he is, he tells us he is "by the grace of God," and though he asserts that he laboured more abundantly than all the Apostles, "yet," he adds, "not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

Such is the mode in which the Church illustrates and enforces the lesson of humility she would teach. She brings before you a Christian man above all others, it may be, endowed with high and peculiar spiritual gifts—a Christian man who, above all others, it may be, made effectual use of his gifts—but still, a Christian man, one like ourselves in all points, exposed to the same temptations from within and without, subject to the same, and

still greater trials than fall to the portion of any whose lot is cast in these days, and bids us learn from him what sort of spirit should dwell in us, who, having been baptised, are endued in one point, at least, with identically the same gift as was St. Paul; our bodies, as was his, having been thereby consecrated to be the Temple of the Holy Ghost, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son. But this is not all. Ere our Spiritual Mother dismisses us with the warning she would hold up, and the lessons she would inculcate, she supplements her teaching by calling to our minds the foundation upon which all is built, and which she bids us hold fast in our memory—the foundation by which we are saved, unless we have believed in vain. And if we must needs boast, it must not be of ourselves, but of God's mercy; if we must needs glory, it must not be in any gift to, or perfection in ourselves, but only in the Cross of Christ, that Cross which was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, which to this day is both a stumbling-block and foolishness to thousands, but which, nevertheless, she has delivered in all its simplicity and fulness to us, having received it from eye-witnesses—as was St. Paul; as were Cephas and the twelve; as were the five

hundred, all of whom now are fallen asleep—how that Christ died for *our sins*, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. Sufficient this to lead us to pray, as in the collect, to that God who thus declared His Almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity, beseeching Him to grant us such a measure of His grace, that we, running the way of His Commandments, may obtain His gracious promises, and be made partakers of His heavenly treasure. Sufficient this, while it should fill our hearts with love and gratitude to God, to humble us to the very dust, and make us feel that whatever be the gifts of the Spirit to us, whatever be the fruits of the Spirit produced by us, no other sentiment should dwell in us but that of deep and profound humility.

W.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

PREACHING BY WORKS.

St. Mark, vii. 37.

“He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.”

THE narrative of the healing of the deaf and dumb man, which the Church has selected as the Gospel for to-day, contains many points of peculiar interest. Looking upon it as those amongst whom it was performed must have regarded it, it was a striking exhibition of supernatural power, which argued for the possessor of that power the rank of being a Prophet sent from God. But there is that in the narrative which would at first sight lead us to suppose from the circumstances connected with this mighty work, that it was done in such a manner as was hardly calculated to gain the end, which, with regard to the inhabitants of the country, it was doubtless intended to produce. I say at *first sight*, because

we shall, upon consideration, see that it actually did effect the object intended, though, according to a merely human view of the narrative, by no means in that simple and obvious way in which it might have been done. But the ways of God are indeed not those of man, neither are His thoughts as man's thoughts.

From the narrative we learn that our Lord was not alone by the Sea of Galilee; that there was a multitude about Him, and that it was when He was in the midst of this multitude that the deaf and dumb person was brought to Him. No better opportunity than this could arise for an exhibition of Divine Power. The restoration of this deaf and dumb man was a work well calculated to produce a powerful effect upon the multitude, and to convince them that He who stood amongst them was somewhat more than a prophet. We are naturally, then, surprised to find a different order pursued, that our Lord took the man "aside from the multitude," and alone with the friends who brought him, performed the work of restoring hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb. Moreover, as soon as the man was restored, he was sent away without being permitted to exhibit to the multitude the great work accomplished for him;

and not only was he sent away, but we find also, that a command was laid upon him and his friends of a peculiar kind, considering the circumstances of the case, and this command was, that they should not tell any one of that which had been done, or of Him who did it. The consideration of these points should afford of themselves sufficient subjects for our meditation; but my object is not to draw your attention to these, so much as to the concluding words of the narrative which contain the particular point and lesson which the Church would this day enforce and teach. The point is this, that so much the more our Lord charged them that they should tell no man, so much the more a great deal they published it; that this work of our Lord's was made known to others, and did effectually preach His power, notwithstanding the private manner in which it was done, and the order not to make it known.

It may have been that the deaf and dumb man and his friends, regarding our Lord as others regarded Him, simply as a prophet sent from God, were so truly grateful for the cure wrought, that they felt constrained, this injunction notwithstanding, to spread abroad the tidings of it to all around. "Tell no man!" they might have said, "how *can* we

shut our lips? where would be our thankfulness, our gratitude to God, if we remain silent? It is true the Prophet told us to tell no man, but surely it must be wrong to hide from our fellow-men this wonderful work of God; and, therefore, though it may be wrong not to obey His request, yet to be silent must be a greater wrong; it is our bounden duty, apart from our love and gratitude to this Prophet, to make this great work of mercy known, that all men may return thanks to God."

Or, again, it may have been that this now restored man and his friends returned to the city with the full intention and purpose of obeying this command of "tell no man," however strange it may have seemed to them. But how could they be silent? Here was a man who was well known to have been deaf to all sound, and unable to articulate distinctly; or in any degree express by voice his thoughts and wishes to others; here was this man walking about the city, listening to all that was said, speaking to all who addressed him. Was not this sufficient of itself to awaken curiosity and excite inquiry? "How is it that you can hear?" "How is it that you can speak?" must have been questions proposed from all sides to him or his friends. A mighty

work had been performed. "How was it done?" "Who did it?" must have been questions that agitated the minds of his fellow-citizens. It would be vain for him to be silent to such questionings, they would meet him at every turn; and sooner or later the truth would come out, and the news spread that this was another of the mighty works of that Great Prophet, who was at that time going up and down their country doing good.

However this may be, the knowledge of this work *was* spread abroad, whether by the eagerness of the man himself and his friends, or by the curiosity and questions of his fellow-citizens; the point on which I would fix your attention in either case remains the same—that it was impossible that such a work should remain hidden and unknown—and that this work was the means by which our Lord's fame and power was preached and published.

So much for the point. Now for the lesson. The lesson that the Church would to-day teach us is, that our good works are the most effectual way of preaching the Gospel; that good works are of such a nature, that their effects can neither be hidden, nor restrained; that they have of themselves a power, so to speak, of publishing the Gospel

of Christ, and with this view the Church points to the Gospel for the day. She says to us, "Study well this narrative of the healing of the deaf and dumb man. See how impossible it was for this good and great work of our Lord's to remain hidden; how it made itself widely known, and in proportion as it was published, how the power of Him who effected it was preached. Learn from this how by good works each one of you can publish far and wide the Gospel of Christ, and make known His kingdom to all around you."

This brings us to the subject of good works; the object of their performance is twofold, one as regards the persons who do them, the other as regards those who witness them; as regards ourselves while it is true, that not one single good work that we do, nor the greatest number of good works that anyone is able in his life-time to effect, can "put away sin and endure the severity of God's judgment, Art. XII," it is equally true that good works are absolutely necessary in order to fulfil the object they are intended to accomplish, inasmuch as we have been created anew in Christ Jesus to perform them. It is equally true that as regards ourselves who have been baptised, and thereby "accounted righteous before God, through the alone merits of our Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ, they are "evidences" "of a true and lively faith," out of which they necessarily spring, and, as such, are pleasing to God. And it is a matter of no small comfort and consolation that God should be graciously pleased with, and condescend to accept anything that we in love offer to Him. While good works fulfil this object with regard to those who do them, they have another object no less important to fulfil with regard to those who witness them, or amongst whom they are done, and that is, that by them the Gospel of Christ is preached.

The works that we do in this life, whatever may be their nature, are an index of the principles which govern our conduct, and thereby are the means by which those principles are exhibited to others. The very language of every-day life bears testimony to this. If we behold a man who, for the benefit of himself, or the furtherance of his own pleasure, disregards the welfare of others, and is careless of the misery and sorrow he may bring on those around him, we express our view of his character in the expression that he is an unprincipled man, or a man without principle. How do we arrive at this conclusion, upon what is our judgment based, except upon the works which we see him perform? On the

other hand, if we meet a man who is true and just in all his dealings, regardless whether his actions tend to his own benefit or pleasure, who is mindful of the welfare of others, and would prefer suffering misery and sorrow himself, rather than by any act of his to entail it upon others, we express our admiration for his character, and style him a man of strict integrity, a righteous man; and upon what do we base this conclusion, that in all he does he acts thus because it is *right*, except by the works of his life? So it is that on all occasions in life we look to deeds, we look to works as the best evidences of the motives which animate, and the principles which govern men's conduct. The same holds good with regard to the life of a Christian. There exists no more sure method by which the motives which animate, and the principles which govern a Christian's course, may be manifested to those without, than a man's acts; and, therefore, there exists no more effectual means by which one and all of us may, in an equal degree, preach the Gospel of Christ, than by good works.

If we examine the writings of the Old Testament, the first thing that strikes us is, that taken as a whole, they are rather the record of a series of actions, works done by different

individuals, than any lengthened statement of what these different persons thought and felt; we find, too, that their actions and works were intended to preach, and most truly did preach, the message of God to man, namely, the re-creation of man's nature in the fulness of time in the Messiah. And while we find this to have been the principal object of the Old Dispensation, taken as a whole, we see also many distinct messages of God made manifest to those of old time by distinct acts, and which, as being complete in themselves, can be more easily appreciated, and therefore may be brought forward as illustrating the manner in which God's revelation was made known to others by works.

Take the instance of Noah. Noah lived in days when the wickedness of man may be emphatically said to have been great. Through wilful carelessness the inhabitants of the earth had completely lost all trace of God's former revelation—all except Noah and his family—this wilful neglect had been so great, and was so totally mens' own fault, that the world must be destroyed, not only as a punishment, but also as an act of mercy, to prevent the continued and further propagation of such moral corruption. Noah and his family were alone to be saved, and to this end God commanded

Noah to build himself an ark. No words or exhortations of Noah could have been so significant of the impending catastrophe as the steady and silent progress of the ark towards completion. It was doubtless a work of time, and throughout the whole period this work of Noah's in building the ark would be a strong exhortation to repentance to the godless nations amongst whom he lived. "The long-suffering of God waited," "while the ark was a preparing." God *waited* to see whether mankind would learn and profit by the message Noah was preaching to them by the ark which he was building.

Again, when man had once more lapsed into ignorance of God, and in proportion to this ignorance of the true God had deified Nature, and become the slaves of idol worship, God chose Abraham to be the instrument by which He might be made known to men. It was man's duty to serve, worship, and obey the one true God, and not to degrade himself by bowing down to beings inferior to himself, or the creation of his own hands; so incumbent was this duty upon man, as man, that in order to perform it, he must be prepared to give up his father and mother, relations, friends, and country, no earthly tie or affection must come between him and the object of his existence.

Abraham preached this doctrine to himself, to his countrymen, to the world, when he turned his back upon his native home, and went, not knowing whither, but only knowing that by so going he was obeying the command of the true God in whom he believed.

But not only must man in the performance of his duty to God be prepared to give up all external ties and affections, he must be ready to give up the dearest wishes of his heart, his most cherished hopes, his brightest anticipations. Abraham preached this doctrine to himself and to the world in preparing to sacrifice his only son, the child of promise, in whom was centred all the future glories of his race. Language is felt to be quite powerless to enunciate these doctrines so vividly, as they were preached by these works of Abraham. "Time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Sampson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel amongst the prophets." (Heb. xi. 32.) And to point out how it was that by their acts, their works, they declared God's message to their brethren; and therefore it is that these works are recorded for our learning, as evidences of the principles which governed their lives, and the instruments by which these principles were manifested to the world.

If we turn from the Old Testament to the New, the same principle, viz. that man by his works may, and does, effectually preach God's will to his brethren, presents itself before us, developed, however, as we might expect, in all its fulness. The Son of God there comes before us as the Perfect Man, the Redeemer of our nature, the Restorer to fallen humanity of all the beauty and harmony, purity and perfection, which, through disobedience to God, it had lost in the person of Adam. With what power is this mission revealed to us by the works which He did during His earthly life, as recorded in the Holy Gospels!

To man was to be restored that inner vision of the blessedness of divine things, which had been dulled and well-nigh lost through the disease which had taken root in and had overspread our nature, and of which physical blindness was both the type and the consequence. How quickened do our perceptions become in discovering this truth, which He came to manifest when He restored sight to blind Bartimæus, and three others similarly afflicted, whose names are not recorded! The reign of the strong man who had in some measure hitherto kept his goods in peace was now to come to an end, the stronger than he was come, in Whose strength we might be victorious over that tyranny within ourselves,

which, while we abhor, we yet feel ourselves powerless to overcome, of which tyranny, demoniacal possession in all its forms is the emblem. We find this fact vividly presented in that work of His, whereby He expelled the legion of devils from the poor maniacs of Gadara.

His Human Nature was from henceforth to be the fountain whence such healing virtue should flow as should heal all spiritual disease, and cure all spiritual deafness, so that once again we might be enabled to hear the voice of our Maker, and the tongue of our hearts be unloosed to show forth His praise. How effectually do we realise this when we read of virtue going out of Him, though but the hem of His garment be touched; or, as in the Gospel for to-day, when we read of that work of His, in which His spittle became the instrument in curing both deafness and dumbness of the body!

Again, He is emphatically the Life, by participation of which man might not only enjoy full communion with, but also escape that utter separation and exclusion from God of which the death of the body is the visible sign. Most forcibly was this declared by those acts of His which restored to the widow of Nain her son, to Jairus his daughter, to the sisters of Bethany their much-loved brother,

Lazarus. By all these works our Lord most powerfully preached, in one sense more powerfully than by His gracious words, the object of His mission here on earth.

We thus see both the Old and New Testament in perfect harmony in pointing out to us, that it is by works rather than by words we are able and best able to manifest the truth. Therefore it is that the Church, by bringing before our notice in the Gospel for to-day the wonderful effects produced by one of our Lord's works, bids each one of us, in our own sphere, and in proportion to our spiritual gifts, go and do likewise. The Church's lesson this day is this, if you really believe in those wondrous truths which she has brought individually before your notice, from Advent to Trinity; if you really love, and are truly grateful to God for His goodness and loving-kindness in your creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, but, above all in your redemption by Christ Jesus, for the means of grace vouchsafed to you here, and for your hopes of glory hereafter; if you really long to declare these good tidings to mankind, and are ready to exclaim with the Apostle, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel," then go and follow the example of the Saints of the Old Dispensation,

and the Head of the New, and by your works preach the Gospel of Christ.

But while we acknowledge the power of works as a means by which truth is manifested and the Gospel preached, can we dare to think and believe that by any works of ours, sinful and corrupt as we are, we can preach that Gospel? Is not the Church bidding us perform that which is altogether beyond our power? Is it not a sad truth "that in me (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do." (Rom. vii. 18, 19.) It is a sad truth, and one which in all her teaching the Church never loses sight of, and last Sunday, when she taught us that the greater the service we would render to God, the greater should be our humility, the inculcation of this humility was based upon this sad truth; and to-day she would not lessen by the faintest line this deep humility and self-distrust, although she magnifies the great effects which our works can accomplish. But lest by contemplating, as it were, too deeply this sad truth, we should be filled by despair, and thus make no efforts to preach the Gospel by our works, she reminds each baptised

child of hers of a strength that is theirs, though not their own; that we *can* do all things through Christ; that Jesus Christ *is* in us, except we be reprobates. (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) Hence, in the Epistle for to-day, the Church teaches us to apply the Gospel individually to ourselves, and would remind us how that once in our lives was accomplished in each one of us a mighty work similar to that recorded in the Gospel. How that as one deaf and dumb we were once brought to our Lord as He stood by the waters of regeneration; that over each one of us such an Ephatha was pronounced as opened for us the kingdom of Heaven; opened our nature to receive the germ of His own pure nature; opened the door of our hearts to admit, and constituted our bodies to be the temple of, a Heavenly guest, even His own most Holy Spirit; and that, therefore, we *can* do works of righteousness, and by these works preach the Gospel of the kingdom; that we, while fully conscious that of ourselves we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, should not, therefore, be despondent, but rather "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees," (Heb. xii. 12,) because our "sufficiency is of God."

This is the trust that the Church teaches

us we have or ought to have, that though of ourselves we are insufficient, yet that we have been made *able* ministers of the New Testament. This is the ground upon which she bases her exhortation to preach by our works the Gospel of Christ, that for this very purpose have we been made *able* ministers. And lest we should still fear that our works may not produce the effects intended, a comparison is instituted between the Old Dispensation and the New; and we are bidden to reflect that if the ministration of the latter was glorious, as exhibited in the works done by those who lived under the law, which glory was in figure manifested in the countenance of Moses, so that Israel could not steadfastly behold his face; how much more does the ministration of the Spirit, of which we have been made able ministers, exceed in glory! And while the Church forbids those who have not been called, as was Aaron, to preach the Gospel as ambassadors, yet to-day she points out that by how much these are restricted in one way from preaching that Gospel, so much the more a great deal in another way are they able by their works to publish it; so that all around them may give God the glory, saying, "He hath done all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

WORKS OF MERCY.

St. Luke, x. 36, 37.

“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.”

LAST Sunday we learnt that every Christian is bound to preach Christ by His works, and that all the lessons of the Church are meant not only for our heads but for our hearts; so this Sunday it is supposed that we shall have a real wish to act upon what we have learnt, and therefore there is a prayer put into our mouths such as is well fitted for one who wishes to engage in this holy ministry.

I mention this, because nothing could be worse either for me who preach, or for you who hear, than that we should merely amuse our fancies with explanations of Holy Scripture and the services. It is not meant that we should trace out the connection of the Collect,

Epistle, and Gospel, and be very much pleased to find how they are all arranged on a plan, and then merely say, "how clever this is, there is much more in the system of the Prayer-Book than I fancied." It is not meant that when you hear any passage of Scripture explained you should merely say, "How deep, and and how wonderful this seems!" Scripture and the services of the Prayer-Book are much too holy to be treated in this way, as if they were only an amusement for our minds, something that we may play with, as a child plays with a puzzle, and is pleased to be able to put it together. I do not mean that it is wrong to find a kind of delight as the Holy Scriptures and the services become clearer to us; far from it; we are bound to worship God "with all our mind," and therefore we cannot do better than use all the powers of our minds in searching into what He has taught us: indeed, it has been said that one of the wonders of the Bible is, that there is in it what the simplest may read and understand, at the same time that there are mysteries which may well employ the skill of the most learned to dive into: but I wish to caution you particularly against hearing a sermon or reading a book, and thinking that all is right with you because you are pleased with it, and agree with it, and un-

derstand it. In these days of much writing, and much preaching, and general talking about religious subjects, all of us are very likely to be tempted to fancy that we are the better because we know more; whereas it should be remembered, that God's Word, and God's Church, the Holy Scriptures, and the Holy Creeds and services, which the heavenly wisdom of God's servants has drawn up for us, were meant to teach us, not only to know God, but to serve Him. Knowing Him is the first step, and a very great blessing it is to have been brought so far as that; a very great blessing to know and understand what God has done for us; yes, and in some measure what He is, and what our duties towards Him are, all which are things that the past services out to have taught us,—but we must not stop here. Let us remember that it is written **“hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”* And again it is written, †*“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”* I thought it right to say this to-day, because we have now gone through a large part of the round of the seasons, and it is well

* 1 St. John, ii. 3. † St. John, xiii. 17.

that you should try your hearts, and see how far you are really profiting in your lives by all the sacred teaching that we have drawn from them.

And another reason for saying this just now is, that this Sunday is a good example of the way in which we may carry on what we have gained from the lessons of one Sunday into the services of the next. Now last Sunday we learnt that we were to preach Christ by our lives, to set forth His love and praise by letting men see what He has done for us.

Do we wish to do this? I trust so. Well, the Collect reminds us that it is only God, almighty and merciful, of Whose gift it cometh that even His faithful people do unto Him true and laudable service.* You wish to be His ministers, after your measure,—all of you, (whatever your estate may be in His Holy Church, high or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant) in your vocation and ministry, you desire truly and godly to serve Him:—begin by acknowledging humbly that you “are not sufficient of” yourselves “to think anything as of” yourselves. Go on to trust firmly in God: your “sufficiency is of Him.” He can make you able ministers. It is *only* of His gift that

* Good Friday, 2. Coll.

it cometh that His faithful people do unto Him true and laudable service. But is a gift that *does* come of Him, as "every" other "good and perfect gift" does, and, therefore, you may pray with a good hope that He would grant that you may so faithfully serve Him in this life, that you fail not finally to attain His heavenly promises.

So far the Collect leads you on not to trust to your own good wishes, your own warm feelings of God's goodness to you, your own love for Him and desire to glorify His Name, but to cast yourselves on Him for strength to devote yourselves to His Ministry, to such a service of Him as a man can perform without attempting to minister the Word and Sacraments. God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. You are ready to work with Him in this. How are you to set about it? The Gospel for to-day tells you. By following the example of the good Samaritan: by not holding yourselves aloof from those whom you wish to win: by showing compassion to them: by going through trouble on their behalf.

The Parable of the good Samaritan arose from the following circumstances: "A certain lawyer stood up," and asked our Blessed Lord, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal

life?" That eternal life of which Thou speakest so much, how is it to be had? what must I do to gain it? Of all questions this is the most important that a man can ask, but the lawyer did not ask it with any real earnestness. He did not ask like the jailor at Philippi,* who came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out of their prison, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" That was the anxious inquiry of a man longing to know the way of salvation. This lawyer asked, as we read, only to "tempt" our Lord; he hoped to draw from Him something which would not agree with the law of Moses, and so to bring some charge against Him for His words. Accordingly, our Lord answers him out of the law of Moses, "What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And our Lord said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." "But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?" It would seem that the lawyer thought that he had certainly kept the commandments of

*Acts, xvi. 29, 30.

the first table, according to all the explanations given of them by the doctors. As to those of the second table, he asks "Who is my neighbour?" meaning, If we are right in saying that by our "neighbour," is meant only those who are of the religion and nation of the Jews, and who live strictly as Jews, then my conscience accuses me of no fault in my behaviour towards them: but what sayest Thou? "Who is my neighbour?" "And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain Priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side: and likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side: but a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I

come again, I will repay thee." The point of this Parable seems to be, that the Samaritan; one despised by the Jew, both for his nation and his religion, one with whom a Jew would have no dealings, should yet have had compassion on the wounded and dying Jew when he found him. No words can add force to the touching description of his tenderness and love. When the Priest passed by with a glance, and the Levite only looked at the poor sufferer, the Samaritan came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. He thought nothing of who or what the man was, whether he was one of his own nation, or one who hated and despised him. He saw his piteous case, and felt for him. He went to him, he bound up his wounds; he poured into them the oil and wine which he had taken as provision for his own journey. He never stayed to think about his own needs or comforts. He spared no toil: he set the suffering man on his own beast, took him to a place of shelter, watched over him himself while he remained, and provided for him when he departed. "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?" So asks our Lord. It was a silent reproof to the lawyer. Could he say for a moment after such a story as this,—a

story, too, which is supposed to relate what really had happened, that the Samaritan had not understood what love for our neighbour is, better than the Jew with all his boasted knowledge of the niceties of the law? Could he doubt that it was the true and holy love of man for man, of a brother for a brother, which warmed the Samaritan's heart, and made him feel that every suffering fellow-creature had a claim on his pity? No; the lawyer felt the force of the parable, and said that the true neighbour was, not the Priest or the Levite who happened to be of the same nation as the wounded man, but "he that showed mercy on him." He confessed this, let us hope, with a humbled heart. "Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise." Go thou and show love and kindness wherever thou findest anyone whom thou canst help and comfort. Open thy heart wider. Do not narrow thy feelings of brotherhood only to those who are of thine own favoured nation, nor to those who have been blessed with the clear knowledge of God, which as a Jew thou hast received. Do not shut out from thy affections and sympathies the Samaritan and the Gentile. No; wherever thou findest one who is a man, and shares the same troubles, the same sorrows, temptations, and dangers,

the same hopes and fears that thou hast thyself, he is thy neighbour. Love him as thyself. Go and do to him as the Samaritan did: have compassion on him.

Now this parable would seem to supply the Churchman with a rule by which to govern his conduct. The Church is now the Israel of God, His chosen people. And who answer to the Samaritans in our days? Those who are in any way aliens from God; aliens, because they do not acknowledge the King of the Jews, nor the kingdom of the Jews, Christ and His Church; aliens, because they claim to worship God after their own fashion, and think nothing of His promised Presence in His Church, or of the ordinances by which He vouchsafes that presence, just as the Samaritans set up their own form of worship on Mount Gerizim, and thought nothing of Jerusalem and the Temple, where God had put His Name to dwell there; aliens, because they follow the devil, the world, or the flesh. In short, the Samaritans are those who have in any manner gone astray from God and Christ and His Church, so as to be now living in unbelief, or heresy, or schism, or worldliness, or carelessness, or open sin. The Samaritans are the very people whom the Churchman, as a witness for God, His Love, and His Truth, is longing to win back. And

how are they to be won back? Not certainly by being treated coldly, or harshly, but by all offices of love and kindness. The Churchman claims to be a child of God, and wishes that all men should be brought into, and induced to live as children of God's one Holy Family, the Church: then let him show himself a child of God by bearing with, and being patient towards others who differ from him, and perhaps misunderstand him: forbearing and forgiving them, as God for Christ's sake has forgiven him. If men see him with his Heavenly Father's character and likeness stamped upon him, they will be more inclined to believe that he is born of God, than they would be by all the arguments in the world. The Churchman claims to be a member of Christ, and a partaker of His Divine Nature:—then let him follow his Lord's example, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. It was the yearning love and tender compassion of our Blessed Master that drew such multitudes after Him. They said of Him, "He hath done all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." It was His ministries of mercy, as much as His words of power, that made men follow Him and cleave to Him, and convinced them that God was with Him.

There went a virtue out of His acts, which worked on men's souls, as the virtue from His sacred Body cured their sicknesses. He was so pure, so gentle, so quick to see their troubles, so ready to deliver them, so patient in the midst of all the strife, and harshness, and contradiction that surrounded Him, that His Presence was like some healing balmy air, cooling the fever and the burning of men's passions, or like some supernatural calm settling down upon the angry waters and hushing them into peace. And we, if we would win men to our Lord now, must do it by copying His acts of love. We can never bring back the wicked to the paths of holiness, nor the unbeliever to the truth, nor the wanderer to the Holy Catholic Church, if we turn from them as those with whom we have nothing to do, if we leave them to take the consequences of what may perhaps have been, in the first place, their own fault. Still less shall we ever persuade them to love the better way if we hold ourselves haughtily towards them, as the Jews did to the Samaritans, if we dare to pride ourselves upon our own spiritual privileges, and to look down upon them. But if with humble and self-forgetting love we show that we can feel for them; if we treat them as our neighbours, love them as ourselves, com-

fort them as we would be comforted, cheer them in sorrow, lighten their distress, go where they are, try to throw ourselves into their circumstances, make allowances for them, feel for them, and feel with them, bind up their wounds, pour in our oil and wine, strip ourselves of our own comforts to relieve them, bear toil ourselves to spare them; if we do this, we may well hope to touch their hearts. We may well hope to move them to love Him Who has taught us to love them. Depend upon it that strife, and argument, and controversy, of which there is so much in our days, do very little to persuade men. They are often like the waves that beat upon the rock, and never move it, but only lash themselves into greater fury. One act of real kindness, one word of true compassion, is worth volumes of contention. When a man does acts of love, by which he gains nothing, for which, perhaps, he gives up a great deal, it is a proof that he is living for something better than this world can give. He will be listened to when he speaks of heaven. Men will almost perforce think of heaven without his speaking of it, for he will move about amongst them as a citizen of that higher, purer state. "His conversation is in Heaven." When a man cares for the wants of all that come in his way, treats all with affection, has

an ear ready for all tales of distress, and is willing to give such help as is in his power to all, and not only because they are his relations, or his friends, or his countrymen; this shows that he acknowledges a higher tie of brotherhood than any of these, that he loves them because they are children of One Father with himself, even of God, who is above all, and through all, and in us all. *When a man is full of "love" towards all, whatever they may be, full of "joy" in all that gladdens others' hearts, full of "peace," however much strife there may be round him, full of "long-suffering," whatever opposition may be raised against him, full of "gentleness" towards those who ill-treat him, full of "goodness" towards those who would provoke him, full of "faith," quiet and calm confidence even in those who mistrust him, full of "meekness" towards those who try his patience, and of "temperance," controlling his evil passions in those very circumstances where most men would give way to them; this is such a proof that such a man's nature is changed, sanctified, and exalted by some hidden power dwelling and working in it, that those who see him and watch him, can hardly doubt that it is the Spirit of Christ who has brought forth such fruits in him. And so

* Gal. v. 22, 23.

lovely, and so attractive is such a character, that men can hardly help longing for the grace of Christ to change them into so blessed a state; they must almost perforce be drawn into the shelter of that holy home, the Church, where such ways are learned; they must yearn to return as repentant children to that Heavenly Father Who has such rich and glorious gifts to bestow.

Alas! brethren, and is this all a dream? At least, it is a thing that has been. Once, at least, there was such a love and holiness beaming forth from the Church through the glorious Presence of Christ in it, that men saw and wondered, and were drawn to it. We read that while the disciples "continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers," "fear came upon every soul."—Acts, ii. 42, 43. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common." "And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Then daily prayer and frequent Eucharist went hand-in-hand with the tender pity and loving-kindness to each other. And before such a sight multitudes were converted. They who so lived "in gladness and singleness of heart," and "praising God," had favour with all the

people. "And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." And it has been so since that day. The greatest conquests that have ever been made have been the kingdoms that have been taught to believe in Christ, by His servants, who gave up all that the world holds dear to suffer and to labour for the bringing of souls to their Lord. Holy brotherhoods of men, bound together in the work of comforting and ministering to the afflicted, or teaching the ignorant, have made the world feel what the love of Christ and the grace of Christ can do. And if the world is to be redeemed from its misery and won to Christ, we must work in the same way in our days. We must own all men as our brethren, treat all as our neighbours, shrink from none, give up none as hopeless. There are thousands living in dark and fearful ignorance; thousands groaning under pressing poverty; thousands lost in vice. We are surrounded on every side by misery, and trouble, and guilt. How can we look on and pass by on the other side, as if this mattered not to us? How can we live on in ease and luxury, spending so much on ourselves, our clothes, our houses, our amusements, sparing so little for the woes of others? How can we go on frittering away our time on trifles, when

we might be doing work for these wretched souls? Do you ask what we can do? Let each one set to work in his own neighbourhood, and honestly try, under the guidance of his own pastor, to find out what works of mercy he can do. There is sphere enough for all. There is no need, in most cases, to wander away from home. It was as the Samaritan journeyed that he came where the wounded man was. God found a work of love for him in the road by which he was going. So He will do for us. There are those round about us who want help in some way; children to be taught; sick to be visited; mourners to be comforted; fallen ones to be raised from their sins; the poor, the hungry, the naked, to be fed and clothed; the lonely to be cheered. Let us go and minister to them, neither grudging to give them freely of what we have, nor shrinking from labour and toil in their behalf, but in gentle, patient, enduring, self-denying love relieving all brethren, and binding up all wounded spirits, and we may be sure we shall do a work that shall speak more for God, and plead with a more touching eloquence for the Saviour in whom we believe, than the tongue of the mightiest preacher. But in the Name of Christ, let us not loiter about this blessed work! Remem-

ber that it is He who is the Good Samaritan indeed! We had gone down from Jerusalem to Jericho, had turned our backs on Heaven to live for this world, and the devil stripped us of that holiness with which God clothed us, and left us naked, wounded, and half dead through sin. Then, when there was no help for us in the law of Moses, which was given and had passed away without healing us, our Lord came where we were. He saw us, and had compassion on us. He looked down from on high. He saw that all men were lost and dying, and out of His Pity He came down to earth, was made man, suffered and died for us. He bound up our wounds by pouring in oil and wine. He renewed our souls with the Blood He shed for us. He refreshed us with the oil of His Holy Spirit. He set us on His own beast. He bare our sorrows Himself, and lets us cast our burden upon Him. He has taken us to the Inn, which is His Church, where He leaves us to be nourished and cared for until He shall come again to receive us unto Himself. Think of this: thou for whom Christ gave up all He had, for whom He laid aside His glory, for whom He journeyed into this bleak, barren world of sorrow: for whom He bled and died upon the Cross that He might wash away

thy sins: think how, when thou wert His enemy, He sought thee out, gave His life, His very self, for thee, lifted thee up from thy misery, treated thee as His brother when thou wert far from Him, to this hour comforts, keeps, strengthens thee: think of this, and for love of Christ, find out all the sufferers thou canst, find out those who seem even the least to deserve thy love, and as thy Lord did for thee, "Go and do thou likewise."

PROPER LESSONS FROM THE EIGHTH
TO THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAYS
AFTER TRINITY.

SCHISM.

1 Kings, xviii. 21.

“How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.”

THERE is no passage in the whole Bible better known than that from which my text is taken, and there is no passage more striking. A whole nation, with God's law in their hands, and God's word in their mouths, had fallen into schism, and had been gliding imperceptibly from schism into heresy. They had not indeed cast off God, for we hear of “two opinions” they were mingling with the worship which had been committed to them by God's ambassador, Moses, forms of worship, and objects of worship, which their own imagination had devised. But they were still God's children; His rebellious children, it may be, but He had not yet cast them off, He offered them a place of repentance. His Prophet, specially sent and commissioned for the purpose, stands before them; openly, evidently, in a manner such as none can gain-

say or resist, he shows forth the absolute supremacy of the God who sent him. "How long," he says, "halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him."

Now there is something more in this expression than meets the eye, something that requires a reference to the previous history of God's people before we can understand it perfectly. The Prophet's words are, "If the Lord be God, follow Him," follow Him implicitly, never depart from any of His ordinances. And if we look back and see in what manner they had begun to depart from God's ordinances, we shall find that though this expression comprehends every thing which God has commanded, moral, ceremonial, and religious, yet that, as the great and prominent defection had been in religious worship, it is religious worship more especially to which the prophet is referring.

This we shall understand by examining the course of Sunday Lessons which the Church has selected for this season, wherein we shall see how it was that the chosen people had arrived at the state in which the prophet found them, and what are the consequences of continuing in that state.

In these Lessons we read the acts of a

people living under the immediate providence of God; when they are faithful they are blessed, when they are blessed they are happy, prosperous, and victorious over their enemies; they experience what David had showed them, that their deliverance from Egypt was but a type and sample of their whole national existence; that in every instance alike God "saved them from the adversary's hand, and delivered them from the hand of the enemy; while as for them that troubled them, the waters overwhelmed them, there was not one of them left." And as it was with the prosperity of Israel, so was it with their adversity—their whole history was but a repetition of their original wilfulness and the consequences of it. "But within awhile they forgot His works, and would not abide by His counsel;" then He did not punish them, but "He gave them up to their own hearts' desire; they were not disappointed of their lust." God does not restrain them, that alone is their punishment; He allows them to do what they desire to do, and to bring upon themselves the consequences; it is the possession of that which they covet that "brings leanness unto their souls." Then they "become stained with their own works, they go a whoring after their own inventions;" this "turns to their own decay," and thus it is

that He "gives them into the hand of the heathen, so that their enemies oppress them, and bring them into subjection under their laws." The government of the Promised Land is no less God's government than that of the Wilderness. What He would show us now is, that though His Hand is now less visibly displayed than it was then, yet even now He is acting, though now He acts through second causes.

But how does this concern us at the present day? Why is it that the Church has chosen the Lessons for six consecutive Sundays from the Books of Kings? How is it that these chapters, historical as they are, and relating, as they appear to do, to a dispensation that has ceased, are lessons *to us*? and the Church does consider them lessons to us, or she would not have selected them for our meditation. Because the dispensation has not ceased, because, so far from having ceased it has been renewed, so that all Christian nations to this day, and not only they, but all individual Christians also, are living under the immediate providence of God now just as they were then.

But we do not see this either in the history of England or in the history of our own lives, as we do see it in the Bible history. Perhaps not; but are we sure that those people saw it

then? When we read the Bible, we see that transgression brought chastisement, and that chastisement brought repentance, and that repentance brought mercy, and that mercy brought a return of prosperity and victory; and we wonder that a people in whose history the superintendence of Providence was so very manifest, could ever have neglected the most easy, the most certain, the most obvious road to temporal prosperity.

Are we quite sure that we are not doing the very same thing ourselves? The Books of Kings are not the history of the Jews; we are continually reminded of this when we are told, at the end of almost every king's reign, that the rest of his acts, and all that he did, and how he warred, are written in the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah or of Israel; which chronicles are forgotten, and the deeds which they recorded forgotten with them. Those, then, which are preserved in the Bible are selections made under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so that the cause and the effect are exhibited within the compass of a few chapters, perhaps even of a few verses; they appear side by side, as it were, and we forget that, in the real history, years, sometimes centuries, intervened between the two events, and that at the time when these things took place,

men must have attributed their successes, as we do now, to the valour of their armies or the sagacity of their rulers; and when they experienced reverses, must have examined, as we do now, into the misconduct of this or that king, or this or that statesman or general, and that they then saw no more than we do now that "it is righteousness that exalteth a nation, and that it is sin that is a reproach to any people."

This is why these Books of Kings are lessons to us just as much as chapters from any other part of the Bible; and not only lessons, but revelations—revelations of the manner in which, could we but see it, God always superintends, directs, and overrules the fortunes of men, bending the current events so as to work out by means of them His purposes of mercy or of vengeance.

Now let us refer the chapter from which my text is taken to the first Lesson of this series. Elijah is sent to reclaim Israel from their sins, but who had led Israel into the sins from which Elijah had been sent to reclaim them? The first Lesson refers this to "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." But why is Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, invariably spoken of as he who made Israel to sin? Did no other king before him or after him exhibit examples of crime, that he should

be thus selected and pointed out from among them all as the cause of all the sin, and consequently of all the chastisement that fell upon Israel unless it was that there was some particular act of Jeroboam which was the cause not only of the sins of Ahab, but of all that accumulation of sin also which in the end cut off from God's grace, then and for ever, the ten tribes of Israel?

And what was that sin? It was not idolatry, but schism; it was a schism sanctioned by the state, and from motives of state policy. God had ordained unity of worship, and had designated and typified it by "the one place which the Lord should appoint among all the tribes to set His Name there." "Jeroboam said in his heart, If this people go up to do sacrifice to the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again to their lord, even to Rehoboam, King of Judah; whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold."

Now we lose the whole force of this lesson if we imagine that Jeroboam either introduced or meant to introduce the worship of a false god, or that he intended the calves themselves to be worshipped, or that they ever were worshipped. What he established was the worship of the True God under a form of his

own devising. The Israelites, who had lived four hundred years in Egypt, and had once become almost Egyptians, could not but have retained the ideas, expressions, and symbols of the country of their adoption. In marking their place of worship by the calves of gold, they had simply taken the hieroglyphic which designated Almighty Power, such as we see in the Egyptian as well as the Assyrian sculptures to this day, and by this had represented the Lord Almighty. Aaron, who first made use of this symbol, did not present it to the Israelites as a new god, but said of the single image, "These be thy *Gods*, thy Elohim, thy Trinity, which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt." So also Asa, in the great religious reformation which took place in his day, never thought of classing these symbols with the idolatrous places of worship which he removed. He suffered them to remain while he put down all idolatry, because they were places where the True God was worshipped.

Where, then, was Jeroboam's sin if he worshipped the True God, and intended the people to worship the True God? His sin was, that he worshipped God after his own judgment, and not after the manner which the Lord God had revealed, and which was practised by the Lord's People. God had

bidden the Israelites to make to themselves no likeness of Him. He did not tell them why He had ordained this. The command was like many of our outward signs at this day, unintelligible, because unrevealed. We know now that the command conveyed a doctrine, we know now that it was to signify, that, before Christ had taken our nature upon Him, not only man never had seen any similitude of God, but was, from his degraded nature, incapable of seeing Him; but this they did not know then, there seemed no reason, so far as man's reason could reach, why they should not designate Almighty Power by any symbol which did designate it.

Jeroboam was not required to understand the reason. He knew what the laws of Moses were, and what usages had been established in Israel in accordance with them. He had set at nought these laws and transgressed these usages, he had taught the people to worship God after his own private judgment, he had broken the unity of his Church by setting up his own places of worship in the stead of those which had been appointed, and instead of the priests of God's consecration, "he made of the lowest of the people priests of the high places, whosoever would he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places."

For this reason, therefore, is Jeroboam the son of Nebat selected from among all the kings that ever reigned as the first and original cause of Israel's sin: and it is the effects of this sin which are traced out in all the proper lessons of this season, and in all the books of Kings and Chronicles, which are, as I said before, not the history of Israel, but selections from the history made by Inspiration for the purpose of working out that doctrine.

And this it is more especially which gives the point to that saying of Elijah, which I have taken as my text, "If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." If you prefer some other god to that God of Israel who delivered you from your bondage, follow him, worship him in any way that he likes best, or that you like best—but if the Lord be God, then worship Him in the way that He has ordained. For you will remark it is entirely a question of worship; we are not told that the people of Israel had then fallen into any particular moral sin, or had committed any particular crime. It was as if a prophet, addressing Christian Churchmen, should say, If you do not believe that God has a visible kingdom upon earth, with its ambassadors and stewards, its laws and ordinances, then act as if you did not believe it, and abide the con-

sequences, whatever they are, of living out of God's Church—but if with your lips you do profess a belief in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, then live “in the Apostles' Doctrine, and Fellowship, and in the Breaking of the Bread, and in the Prayers.”

Now let us look at the typical personages which the Church has presented to our view at this season, for they all illustrate this position. The principal of them are in Israel; Jeroboam himself, Elijah, Elisha, Ahab, and Jehu—in Judah, the Disobedient Prophet, Jehosaphat, Ahaziah, Hezekiah, and Josiah; the whole series concluding with the final rejection and dispersion of that Israel, whom Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had made to sin; and with the temporary alienation and captivity of God's Church of Judah, which, after the warning example of the sister kingdom had been taken away, had itself become deeply imbued with the sin of Israel, though not like Israel irrecoverably cut off.

In the first Lesson of the series we have the doom of the schismatical altar pronounced on the very day of its erection; and in the last Lesson of the series we have the accomplishment of that doom; thus marking the unity of the whole. “O altar, altar,” said the Lord's Prophet, under His special Inspiration,

“Thus saith the Lord: Behold, a child shall be born to the house of David, (the true succession,) Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee;” implying the extremity of degradation and pollution. And the Lord gave a sign that day, (a very significant sign, that the altar set up in schism is unable to retain the sacrifice.) The altar, we are told, “was rent, and the ashes that were upon it were poured out.”

This Lesson is the more remarkable and the more typical of Christ’s Church now on earth, because this public denunciation took place after Rehoboam had been forbidden to take the matter into his own hands. Schism is a punishment; it is a grievous evil on any nation that suffers under it; it is an instrument of God’s wrath, like war, or famine, or pestilence. It had been brought upon Israel not for the punishment of the schismatic tribes alone, but for the punishment of the whole nation, and of their king in particular. God had brought it upon them, his prophets had predicted it, and Jeroboam was acting on that prediction. Nevertheless, lest men should forget that because it was a punishment it was also a sin, on the very first day on which the new kingdom, with its new form of

worship, is inaugurated, its downfall is predicted under the administration of that very house from which it had been rent. And that is the reason why Josiah, who lived three hundred years after these events, is designated by name.

The last Lesson of this series, that for the thirteenth Sunday after Trinity, contains the accomplishment of this prophecy. "The altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he (Josiah) brake down, and burnt the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burnt the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the Mount, and sent and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burnt them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord which the Man of God proclaimed who proclaimed these words."

The history of Ahab is simply the working out of the sin of Jeroboam to its inevitable consequences. The principle of God's worship once forsaken, the line between established worship and private liberty once broken through, there is no farther stop, because there is no other rule except expediency. State policy had introduced the establishment of places of worship at Bethel and at Dan;

state policy next induces the alliance with the powers of the world, Tyre and Sidon. This requires farther relaxations; and thus Jezabel completes what Jeroboam had begun; that which began in schism, has terminated in heresy; the worship of the true God after unauthorised forms, has led to false worship; it is but another step on this same road, and that is the road pointed out by Jeroboam.

Elijah, the type of Christ, (and no less Elisha, his follower and successor, the type of Christ's ministers,) is the exponent of this. The sin of Ahab, the proximate cause of his own destruction and that of his family, indeed the only definite crimes recorded against him, is principally an exemplification of the state of irreligion to which Israel had been reduced. We, forgetting the typical character of the Lord's People, and estimating them according to the manners and customs which we see about us, overlook the real sin of Ahab, and fix our attention on the murder of Naboth, which, in fact, was only the consequence of it, and, after all, the act, not of Ahab, but of his wife. When Naboth says, "The Lord forbid it me that I should give the INHERITANCE OF MY FATHERS unto thee;" it is something of far higher import than the simple reluctance of a man to part with his property. The inher-

ance of the Israelites in the Promised Land had a symbolical meaning, which was the foundation of all those laws which rendered them inalienable under any circumstances. Ahab's request to Naboth was like asking a man to part with his Christian privileges, his membership with Christ, his inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven. That such a thought should have entered into the mind of Ahab at all, proves not only that the forms which the Lord had appointed for his worship had been lost, but that the spirit and meaning which those forms had been intended to embody and convey had departed with them. The sin is conceived by Ahab, the heretical Israelite, but the execution of it is carried out by Jezebel, the unscrupulous heathen with whom he had allied himself.

Elijah is the type of Christ, as Elisha, his follower and successor, is the type of Christ's ministers; they are the exponents of this whole series of Lessons. In the days of Ahab the sin of Jeroboam has produced its fruit, and the whole people have gradually fallen away from the worship of God, while His Church has been so reduced by oppression and by faithlessness, that the prophet imagines that he only of the worshippers of the Lord is left. The spring of grace has been dried up,

and God's prophet has announced that as the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom he stands, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to His word.

The history of the Reformation of Israel runs through several consecutive Sunday Lessons, and is too well known to need repetition. In answer to the question of the prophet, which forms my text, the Lord is openly and publicly acknowledged as God, and a return of His blessings is the immediate consequence. The Reformation is commenced, is carried out partially at that time, and more generally in the days of the great reformer, Jehu; but the original cause of the sin is not taken away, "to wit, the golden calves that were at Bethel and at Dan;" and we are told that "Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord with all his heart, for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin." No reformation is or can be permanent which is based upon anything short of a return to the unity of God's worship; and the reformation of Jehu, extensive as it was, showed nothing more than the futility of the attempt.

Therefore we are told, immediately after this, and as if this had been the last trial allowed, that in those days the Lord began to

cut Israel short, and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel. Then follows the final and complete dispersion of the ten tribes, and the extinction of the schismatic kingdom.

Throughout the whole of this period, the history of Judah is kept subordinate to that of Israel; for the lesson of the season is carried out mainly by the latter kingdom. The principal characters we meet with in the history of Judah up to this time, are the Disobedient Prophet, Jehosaphat and Ahaziah; and these all convey the same lesson. No crime is imputed to anyone of them directly, nor have they any of them departed from following the Lord; yet they all meet with punishment in one form or other; and this arises invariably from their connexion with the schismatical kingdom. In the last of them, Ahaziah, whose connexion is closer than that of the others, namely, that of affinity, the line of David is all but cut off, and the succession is preserved only by an act of special providence. But all this is the direct consequence of his father's marriage with Athaliah, daughter of Omri, king of Israel. The reason why Jehu followed after Ahaziah, and cried out so eagerly, "Smite him also in the chariot," and the reason why, after the destruction of Ahab's family, he slew at the pit of the shearing-

house the brethren of Ahaziah, even forty and two men, is, that these were, through Athaliah, the natural successors to the throne of Israel, which Jehu was endeavouring to usurp; while the completion of the punishment is worked out by Athaliah herself, who “when she saw that her son was dead, and that, failing the family of that son, she herself was the natural heir of both kingdoms, “arose and destroyed all the seed royal.”

To us these punishments seem altogether disproportioned to the offence: the very prophet who, under God’s inspiration had boldly and faithfully discharged his duty before the king and the assembled people at his own imminent risk, is punished with death, at that by God’s own act; yet his connexion with the country was, after all, simply that of receiving hospitality from a brother prophet. Why had God forbidden this? and why did He so immediately and so severely punish so venial a transgression? and, above all, why is the history of the Disobedient Prophet recorded, and why is it read to us as a Sunday lesson? unless it is to mark the lesson, again and again enforced by the example of Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah, that however much we are enjoined to perform good offices to those who are without, it is not God’s will that we

walk as friends with those who will not walk with us as friends in the House of God.

After the dispersion of the Ten Tribes, the History of Judah takes a more prominent place in the Church's teaching, and the lesson pointed out by the defective reformation of Jehu is repeated, and more forcibly impressed by the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah. Both of these were good kings, both were eminent reformers, both were, to a considerable extent, successful, and both drew down blessings and deliverances upon their people, and, for themselves, went down to their graves in the peace that had been promised to them personally, as the reward of their faithfulness. But the remarkable thing is, that both these reformations, like that of Jehu, were the immediate precursors of punishment—the one heralded the downfall, the other the captivity of Judah.

Now the recurrence of the same thing, in three separate instances, the details of which are all widely different each from the other, points out this lesson most distinctly, that reformation, like repentance, is never our own work, but that opportunities of both are, from time to time, held out to us by God; and that consequently, so far from there being merit in a partial and incomplete reformation, the failure of it is an additional cause of con-

demnation, since it is another mercy slighted and another offer rejected; it is, "O if thou hadst known, *at least in this thy day*, the things belonging to thy peace, but *now* they are hidden from thine eyes."

Still the condemnation of Judah is not like that of the kingdom that had cut itself off from God. Schismatic Israel had been finally and hopelessly rejected; treacherous Judah is chastised, and for a period alienated from the Land of Promise, but not without hope of return and restoration.

There is one chapter in this series which we have passed over: apparently it has nothing to do with the subject of the season; if we examine it closely, it will be found to give the key to the whole.

It is the story of Naaman the Syrian.

The lesson which it conveys, is the value of outward and visible signs when the Word of God has made them vehicles of inward and spiritual grace. It points out, therefore, most clearly in what consisted the sin of Jeroboam, and in what consists the sin of those who follow his example, in substituting their own ideas of what is right or expedient for the ordinances of God's Church. "My father," said the servants to Naaman, "if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, would thou

not have done it; how much rather than when he saith unto thee, Wash and be clean?" Now the general application of this is evident—the more unimportant do these things appear to us, the easier are they of performance; when, therefore, like Jeroboam, we postpone them to what we consider weightier reasons, then we show our want of faith in Him Who appointed them. Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, might have been better than all the waters of Israel; but the Word of God, through His prophet, had sanctified the one, and had not sanctified the other; and so Dan and Bethel might have been places of worship more accessible than Jerusalem, but God had placed His Name on the one, and not on the other. The priests of Jeroboam's consecration might have been quite as good men as the family of Aaron, but God had consecrated the one, and He had not consecrated the other. The whole sin of schism in these days lies in the fact, that Christ prayed that we might be one, as He was one with the Father, and in its being a virtual renunciation of that act of unity which makes us one with Christ. "He that gathereth not with Me scattereth." And therefore it is that the Church, at the time when, by those Epistles and Gospels which it has chosen for this particular season, urges

upon us works such as should adorn the life of every Christian, by its course of lessons presses upon us the fact which is insisted on in the Thirteenth Article, that even if good works, "if they are not done as God has willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but that they have the nature of sin."

We will not take upon us to say that man can never do one single good deed in his own strength ; if we did, common observation would contradict us at once ; we see every day good deeds done by those who we have no reason to suppose put their whole trust in God. What we do say is, that there is nothing on earth that will *insure* the performance of good deeds ; nothing that will keep us in the daily practice of God's commandments, except our being one with Christ, working, as it were, with His strength and His righteousness, as members of Him, and parts of His Body. Divided from that Body, we are as branches separated from the tree, as limbs separated from the trunk ; we then stand, if we stand at all, in our own strength ; it must be so—we can derive no strength from that from which we are divided.

The bond of connexion which unites the several members with their common Head, is God's ordinances duly administered and duly

received. Why it should be so, or how it happens that these unite us with Christ, we do not know ; all that we do know is, that such is the case, “that he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved ;” “that he that eateth the Flesh of Christ, and drinketh His Blood, dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him ;” “that where two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ, there He is in the midst of them ;” that when His ambassadors lay their hands on them, they receive the Holy Ghost for that work whereunto the Lord has called them.

In the case of the Israelites, the act of Jeroboam severed this connexion by invalidating the link which then connected God with man—the ordinances of the Old Dispensation. These ordinances were of no more intrinsic value than the Christian ordinances now ; their sole value depended on their being the appointment of God. Instead of these, Jeroboam had substituted ordinances very similar, and in themselves probably quite as valuable as those for which he substituted them ; but they derived their validity from him who appointed them. From that time forward, therefore, the ordinances were the ordinances of Jeroboam, administered by the priests of Jeroboam, not the ordinances of God, administered by the priests of God. Israel, therefore, stood

on the strength of Jeroboam, not on the strength of God.

And this is the effect of schism now. It invalidates the connecting link between God and man, and from that time forward its ordinances are the ordinances of man, its priests are the priests of man, its strength is the strength of man, and its works are the works of man. Schism is not incapable of producing good men, any more than the strength of man is incapable of exhibiting detached acts of virtue. A severed branch will for a time put forth green leaves—even in Israel God had once seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal. But though its doom is not immediate, it is inevitable, it is a gradual drying up ; and this is the real difference between the branch which is still united to the stem, and that which has been severed. Treacherous Judah may have fallen into sin, may have forfeited the defence of God, may have been for the time alienated from Him and sold into captivity ; but the bond is not severed, the flow of grace is not stopped, a fresh spring will produce repentance, and repentance restoration, when the days of mourning shall have been accomplished—for backsliding Israel there is no return.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

GIVING GLORY TO GOD.

St. Luke, xvii. 15.

“And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.”

FROM the services of last Sunday we learnt the lesson, that we are to show mercy to one another, and that by our works of mercy, by all works of kindness and love which Christians do to those around them, God's glory is made known, and men are drawn to Him. The lesson which is given us this Sunday, seems to be, that God has shown mercy to us, and that we, by our thankfulness, are to let men know that He has done so, and so to stir their hearts to adore Him as we ourselves do.

In the Gospel we read the history of the ten lepers. “As our Blessed Lord entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off.” They kept themselves apart from others, either because

the law commanded them to do so, or because they were so manifestly defiled with leprosy that no man would join their company. But He who was now coming towards them was One who could not be defiled by them ; nay He had shown that He had power to take away such uncleanness as theirs. Moreover, He was One who never turned away from the wretched and suffering, therefore, "they lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us." Their trouble wrung this earnest cry from them, just as our sorrows and sicknesses often move us to pray to God, when perhaps nothing else would touch us. And they prayed with a most perfect trust in the Saviour, "Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us. Thou that bearest the Name of Saviour; Thou at Whose Word the diseases and pains of men have fled from their bodies to afflict them no more, have mercy upon us!" They speak like men that feel sure that He will know, and understand, and enter into their distress. "Have mercy upon us." Here is no long prayer to describe their wants, or to enlarge upon their misery and affliction: nothing but the simple appeal, "Have mercy upon us!" What we are Thou canst see; what we feel Thou can'st behold: "Lord, Thou knowest all our desire, and our groaning

is not hid from Thee:" "have mercy upon us!" "And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests." At once our Lord takes pity upon them, but He does not heal them with a word or a touch. He tells them to observe the ordinance of God about lepers. And they did so. They took the words of Christ, "Go show yourselves unto the priests," as a promise that if they obeyed this command they would be cured. The same trust and faith in Christ which had led them to Him, and moved them to cry to Him for mercy, still taught them to do what He told them to do for their cleansing. "And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed." So far, all the ten lepers were alike. They had all been suffering under the same loathsome and horrible disease. In their distress they had all betaken themselves to the same merciful Saviour. They had all cast themselves with the same trust on His tender compassion. They had all prayed with the same earnestness. They had all shown the same faith in doing exactly what the Lord told them to do. They made use of the ordinance which He ordered them to use. And they were all cured. But at this point of their history there comes out a matter which shows that

there was still a great difference in them. After they were cured, nine of the lepers went their way, as if there were nothing more for them to do, no further duty to perform: but "one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice, glorified God. And fell down on his face at His Feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan." His heart was full of thankfulness; it was bursting with the sense of the exceeding goodness and love of Him Who had done so great things for him, and he could not help telling out before all what God had done for him. "He gave glory to God:" he made others hear and know how the power and might and graciousness of God had been put forth in his behalf. The feelings that stirred in his soul were like those of the Psalmist: * "Gracious is the Lord and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple: I was in misery and He helped me. Turn again, then, unto thy Rest, oh! my soul," turn back to Him Who showed Himself thy Rest when thou wert weary and heavy laden with grief, "for the Lord hath rewarded thee." "What reward shall I give unto the Lord for all the benefits that He hath done unto me?" "I will pay my vows now in the pre-

* Ps. cxvi. 5, 6, 7, 11, 13.

sence of all His people." "I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving." And it was in no cold or formal way that he offered up his praises. No; the warmth of love and gratitude that had been kindled in him showed itself in outward as well as inward worship. He fell down on his face at "the feet" of Jesus, as if he would have expressed, **"Behold; oh! Lord, I am thy servant; see here the body Thou hast made whole, the soul Thou hast taught to know Thee; they are Thine; with all the powers of both I glorify Thee."*

Meanwhile, where were those others who had received the same mercy as this one who knelt before Christ? Gone without a thought of His Goodness: gone on their way full of selfish joy that they had got what they asked for, but never thinking for a moment of what they owed to our Lord, and He, Who watched them as they went, spoke and pleaded with their hard hearts, when He answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And He said unto him, "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole." Thus our Lord welcomed the faith that burned as brightly in the hour of blessing as in the hour

* Ps. cxvi. 14.

of trial, that looked to God in its happiness as much as in its trouble; while in the very same words He mournfully reproached those who thought of Him in the time of need, only to forget Him when they were treating of His goodness.

Now let us apply this to our own case. The leper healed and giving glory to God, is set before us as our example. You will scarcely need to be reminded that leprosy is a type of sin. The man therefore who was afflicted with this polluting disease, is a type of the soul with the taint of sin in it, destroying its life, making it foul in the sight of God, and unfit to be amongst His people. His coming to Christ and crying to Him for mercy, teaches us that our Lord is the One only Saviour Who is able to take away sin, to make us a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us. His being sent by Christ to the priest, shows us that though our Lord can heal either soul or body by a word or a touch, He is pleased to work by certain ordinances, and that we must use those ordinances if we wish to be healed. Up to this point, then, our own spiritual condition, as members of Christ's Church, exactly answers to the case of the cleansed leper. By our natural birth, as children of Adam, we had the foul

taint of sin in us, we were unclean in the sight of God, and separated from Him, and His children. It was the merciful and loving command of Christ which sent us to the priests. Our parents took us to the holy font of Baptism, that the precious Blood of Christ might wash away our sins, and His Spirit make us new creatures, and renew us in holiness. As we went we were cleansed: through the Atonement of Christ we were forgiven, accepted as the children of God, admitted into the holy family of God, the Church, and enrolled in the Communion of Saints. Far, greater are our blessings than were those bestowed upon the leper. What gifts and mercies have we received! The grace of Christ has flowed into our souls, to be within them a fountain of life and strength. We have been brought back to God, and are under the shelter of His continual care. Not a day, not an hour, but He watches over us. He guards, defends, and guides us. His Spirit is ever with us. His Word teaches us. The prayers of our fellow-Christians are ever going up on high for us, to be joined with the prevailing Intercessions of our Great High Priest, and offered by Him. Angels minister to us. The Gate of Heaven lies open before us, and a place in the glory of God is prepared for us.

Such is our blessed lot, once so far from God, now so near to Him, and yet to be brought nearer still! What then? If that poor leper when he was healed, in the fulness of gratitude with which his heart overflowed, could not but come back to Christ and set forth His glory, how much more ought we to do this! Accordingly, the Apostle St. Peter sets this before us, as one of the great duties which arises out of our high privileges as Christians: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His Marvellous Light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."* If we do indeed feel the goodness of God towards us, then we shall wish to speak of Him in such a way that others may be drawn to see and know His goodness also. And how are we to do this?

One way to do it is, by taking our part in the public worship of God. Just as the leper, while he cast himself on his face before our Lord, and declared what God had done for him, at once paid his own thanks, and also made others see the goodness of God, so do

* 1 St. Pet. ii. 9, 10.

we bear witness for God in the public services of the Church. This is a thing which is far too little thought of. Even religious persons, who are in the constant habit of going to Church, often overlook it. If you ask them why they go, they will tell you that they go to pray, to ask pardon of God for their sins, to seek for grace, to hear God's Word. Now all this is true, but it is not enough; it is not the full truth; and what is more, it shows that there is something very much amiss in anyone's heart if he puts these things forward as his chief reason for going to Church. No doubt it is a very great blessing to hear God's Word, to hear the Bible read, and to be instructed by the catechisings and sermons of God's ministers. It is a still higher blessing to be allowed to meet as God's family, to pray with and for each other. It is even a higher blessing still to gather together as the Body of Christ, and to know that Christ is in the midst of us when we do so; our great High Priest to intercede for us; our Brother able to feel for us, understand our wants, and pity us; our Head, Who takes so tender a care of all His members. There cannot be a greater comfort for us, weak, and tempted, and troubled as we are, than thus to pray with the certainty that our Lord is with us, so ready to

hear and forward our petitions, so full of grace to help us.

But if we go to Church mainly for these reasons, there is a great fault in our worship, and a fault which will very much mar and spoil it. We are thinking only of ourselves. We are worshipping God only for what we can get, whereas the great object of worship is not that man may gain this or that thing, but that the glory and majesty of God may be set forth. The very name of the act shows this. We call it public *worship*, that is to say, the offering of our service and homage to God in such a manner as to show that we feel and acknowledge His greatness, His Love, His bounty towards us. And, therefore, our *chief* desire and intention, when we go to Church, ought to be not to get what we can for ourselves from God, but to offer to Him what we can in token of our thankfulness for His unspeakable benefits bestowed upon us. We go up to the courts of God as His people, as those who wish to show themselves as subjects of the Great Heavenly King. Everyone who goes to Church, is so far a witness of the power and majesty of God to the whole parish. Thus the public services become the means by which thankful hearts find a vent and expression for their own feel-

ings of devotion to God, and, at the same time, a means of making known His glory to the world.

It is for this reason that the services are public, held before all men, in the face of day, that the knowledge of God and of His goodness may be spread wider and wider. It is for this reason that the buildings in which we worship are made as beautiful as the skill of man can make them, that everyone who enters them may be made to feel the majesty of God, to Whom our Churches belong. It is for this reason that they are adorned with all that is rare and costly, and skilful in workmanship, that the faithful may have an opportunity of showing their sense of God's goodness, and their belief that nothing is too good for Him Who is the Author and Giver of all good things. It is for this reason that we try reverently to perfect the music of the chants and hymns that are sung here, that so the praise of God may be set forth as the most high and blessed work that man can take part in. It is for this reason that our outward acts of worship are lowly and devout. We stand reverently, we bow in adoration, we kneel in humility, that we may express that we believe we are in the Presence of the great King of Heaven, of Him to Whom we owe

every comfort on earth, and every hope of glory; and that others, too, may be drawn to Him, before Whom every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. Just as the leper, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His Feet, giving Him thanks, so the whole company of the redeemed, thrilling with joy and thankfulness to Him Who has saved them, casts itself at His Feet, and lifts His praises, that the whole world may hear and wonder and believe. And not only on earth, but in Paradise also, this same worship of thanks and adoration is paid to God. There, too, they fall down before the Lamb, and sing, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy Blood." "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

And you, brethren, what are you doing? Are you taking your part in thus glorifying God? Or is your voice silent in the great hymn of praise? your heart out of tune with the song of those who love Christ? your knee too proud to bend where others bow before Him? your soul, perhaps, even thinking so

little of His goodness, that you go on your way through life without returning to give Him glory at all? Alas! there are many unthankful lepers, many who have been cleansed with Christ's Blood, comforted by His Spirit, redeemed from Hell, brought into a state of salvation, and yet think nothing of these unspeakable mercies. If it were not so, how could our Churches be so empty, or the services in them so few, or the worship offered there so cold and careless, and irreverent? If the hearts of those for whom Christ died, if all our hearts felt what that Blessed Saviour has done for us, the Churches would be thronged, men would ask for more services; they would never be content with coming once a week on a Sunday; as every day they receive so many blessings, so every day they would long to offer up their praises in return. Further still, if our souls were warm with thankfulness, the whole character of our worship would be changed. There would be no silent, inattentive *listening* to the service, as if it were a thing for the priest and the choir to go through by themselves. There would be no lounging and sitting down wearily, as if it were a trouble and burthen to come to Church. No! indeed. Can we imagine an angel refusing to take his part in the worship of

God in Heaven, thinking it a toil to sing or to bow down with the rest of the heavenly host? Not for a moment. And why not? Because those blessed spirits are full of love and thankfulness to God. And if we, for whom God has shown far more love in giving His Son to die for us when we were lost, if we did indeed feel His goodness, every voice would help to swell the songs of praise, and every knee would humbly bow before His footstool.

But look a little more closely at the Gospel, and you may perhaps learn how it is that there are so many unthankful hearts amongst those whom Christ has blessed. The only one of the lepers who returned to give glory to God for his healing was a Samaritan. The other nine who were so thankless were Jews; and our Lord's words about them were, "There are not found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger." It was a stranger, one who belonged to a nation that knew but little of God, who was most touched by our Lord's goodness. He indeed could not help returning thanks. His heart was so warm, that he must come back and acknowledge what God had done for him. But the other nine, the Jews, belonged to the chosen people of God. They belonged to a nation who were by covenant favoured by Him. They

were every day within reach of His blessings; and so it may be that when they were healed, when they received this fresh mercy from Him, they thought the less of it; they took it rather as a matter of course, almost as if they had a right to expect it.

To turn back to ourselves—what is it that tempts people now to forget their Christian blessings, and make little account of them? Surely one main cause of this is, that they have been so used to hear of them. From childhood up they have known that they were forgiven and accepted by God at their baptism; that through His Spirit they were then born again. They have said repeatedly in the Catechism that they are members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the exceeding mercy of God in all this does not strike them. Very often the heathen who has been brought to believe in Christ, or the man who has learnt the love of Christ, after living for many years in carelessness or ignorance, is more full of love and thankfulness to the Saviour. And yet there can be no doubt that those who have been blessed, and kept, and strengthened by the grace of Christ all their lives, or who, at any rate, have been within reach and hearing of His gifts of grace, those

who have known of His love, His saving cross and passion, His continual mediation, they ought to thank and glorify Him most. But all of them do not, and for this very reason, that they receive their daily blessings without thinking of the Hand from which they come. Therefore their hearts get hardened. They take it as a matter of course that God will still love them, His Spirit still work in them, the Devil still be driven from them. They forget that if the Holy Spirit does dwell in them, this comes of His goodness Who stooped to be made man for us: that if the Devil is conquered, this is only through the might of Him Who first suffered Himself to be tempted that He might conquer for us: that if God the Father loves us, this again is only through the suffering of that same Lord Whose cross is our shelter and safeguard every moment we live. The fact is, that thankfulness is a special gift of God, and must be sought for, like all other gifts, by prayer. When we first experience or hear of the love of God, it is likely enough to rouse up warm feelings in our hearts, but through the weakness of our corrupt nature, such feelings do not last. They grow cool and die out. What, then, are we to do? The Epistle tells us, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Beware

of the weakness of your nature; do not trust it, but lean upon the help of the Holy Spirit of God. Take the Collect for this week, and ask the "Almighty and everlasting God," ask of Him Who alone has all power, and Who alone never changes, to "give unto you the increase of faith, hope, and charity:" to fill you ever more and more with such belief in Him as shall make you constantly see His continued goodness to you—to fill you with such hope in Him as shall encourage you still to look to Him for fresh mercies in your time of need—to fill you with such love to Him as shall grow warmer at every new instance of His love. Then, by His grace, you will never grow cold or indifferent to His favours; your thankfulness will not die out; your Lord will not look sadly after you as He did after the thankless nine. You will not be one of those over whom He says, "Where are they for whom I suffered those long agonies on the Cross, and tasted the pangs of death? Where are they with whom I have pleaded by My Spirit? for whom I have prayed, over whom I have watched, whose prayers I have so often heard, whom I have comforted in so many troubles, soothed in so many sorrows, defended in so many dangers? Where are they? Gone into the midst of the world's pleasures, gone to

hunt for money, or the praise of men, or for luxury—and to forget Me! No, as your heart turns with thankfulness you will be more often at the feet of Christ. In the songs of His Church He will know your voice as that of one who never tires of praising Him. In the Holy Eucharist, that highest service of thanksgiving, He will see how you ever keep up the remembrance of His death, to which you owe your all. It may be that as you thus glorify Him, the earnestness of your praises will invite others to join; the heartiness of your service will lead others to taste for themselves that mercy which they see you prize so highly; the warmth of your thankful love may spread from you to others, and kindle in their hearts the same holy glow. It may be that it will be your lot at last to stand before the throne of God in glory, with others at your side, before whom your fervent adoration first set forth the glory and the love of that Lord whom it is your privilege to worship without ceasing for evermore. But even if this be not granted you, if you do not draw others in your train, at least you may hope to hear for yourself that blessed sentence from the lips of your Judge, "Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole." The faith which first drew thee to Me for pardon and for grace, the faith

which made thee acknowledge all the cure of thy weak and sin-stained soul as My work, the faith which made thee hold fast to Me in the hour of repentance, in the hour of strife and trial, hath made thee whole. Every spot and stain of guilt is now done away through My Atonement; every weakness and imperfection of soul is now healed by My grace. Thou art made perfect, and unblameable in holiness before me for ever. Arise, go thy way; arise, from the toils and sufferings, the fears and dangers, the temptations and struggles of the world. Go thy way into the peace, and rest, and bliss, and perfection of Heaven, into the presence of God, and the joy of thy Lord for evermore.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SINGLENESSE OF PURPOSE.

St. Matt. vi. 22, 23.

“The light of the body is the eye: if, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.”

THE object of this Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity is, to set forth singleness of purpose as indispensable to the attainment of eternal life. The whole of its Gospel is but an illustration of the text which immediately precedes it, and that text is a very remarkable one: “If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.”

In our natural bodies God has given us one means, and one only, whereby we are enabled to discern the difference between one thing and another, by which we are capable of directing our steps aright, of seeing what to seek and what to avoid, of discriminating between what is hurtful and what is beneficial, and generally of undertaking any work of any nature which may be set before us.

That one means is the eye—it is the only avenue of light to the body.

If that eye be closed or darkened, it is quite evident the body must be in darkness; but that is not the figure, that would convey no lesson: our Saviour's word is not dark, but "single." We have two eyes; if their axes are so directed that their vision is single, then these eyes are quite sufficient to serve us in all these purposes, and in every purpose for which the Lord gave them to us.

But if these eyes are evil—diseased—so that the singleness of that vision is distorted, so that two objects are taken into the senses at every glance, the effect would be, for all practical purposes, much the same as if the eye was actually darkened; no one step could be planted in certainty and confidence, no one work could be undertaken to any purpose, everything would be confused and distorted and out of proportion, so that the eye, which was given us for a guidance and direction, would be the very means of misleading us. We must not, therefore, understand the parable to mean, that if our desires, or views, or objects, were evil, then our whole nature would become evil; that would be true, but it would be such a truism, such a common-place, that the Lord

would never have given it us as a lesson. His meaning is this: you know, He would say, that in the natural body, if your eye loses its singleness of vision, it will be useless for any purpose of this life; consider this to be equally true of your moral vision, and of eternal life. Never propose to yourselves two objects at once, be they what they may; not evil objects, that of course, but any objects—any two objects will render your moral vision “evil,” or, in other words, will impair it, spoil it, unfit it for the purposes for which it was given, so that that which, enlightened by God’s grace, would have directed you well, will become a misleading guide amid the doubts and difficulties of the world, and an unsafe warning amid its dangers.

But the warning is more solemn even than this; the danger we incur is something greater than not being directed, or not being able to undertake a work; there is a positive loss, a positive evil shadowed in the words, “how great is that darkness,” as if it were something greater than anything that preceded it; as if He should say, naturally you are in darkness, naturally your moral sense has been so impaired by the consequences of Adam’s sin, that there is nothing in you by which you could discern right from wrong; God has

given you one means of doing this, but beware, there is but one, do not injure it, do not distract it, keep it fixed on the single object of your ambition, lest you should injure it by distorting it; for—here comes the warning—if you suffer that very thing which God has given you for light to become darkness through any neglect or misuse of your own, how much greater, how much more distressing will that darkness be, than if God had never given you light at all! A man who has been blinded is a far more pitiable object than a man who has been blind from his birth. “How great is that darkness!” Your very darkness is darkened; if you have allowed your light to become darkness, what will your darkness be?

By the word mammon, which we meet in this Gospel, we generally understand riches; it does signify this, but its meaning is much more comprehensive; it signifies all advancement and prosperity which relates to this world only, as distinguished from that which relates to the world to come. It does not necessarily imply anything that is evil in itself and by its own nature; it may be or it may not be evil, this depends on the way in which it is acquired, and the way in which it is used. It is called the mammon of unrighteousness, because it is that which the

unrighteous are capable of appreciating and valuing as well as the righteous.

Now we know that there is nothing in the Bible which prohibits us from honest ambition, whether that ambition be directed to the increase of our wealth, or the advancement of our position in the world. A very few Sundays ago, our Lord showed us how, by means of this very mammon, which, lest we should have any doubt as to what He meant, He particularized as the mammon of unrighteousness, we might, when we fail, that is, die and lose our stewardship on earth, make for ourselves such Friends as will receive us into everlasting habitations. He evidently does not mean, therefore, that we are not to seek wealth or honours, or influence, or anything that this world values, neither does He permit us to stigmatise as worldly those who do.

The fact is, that the lesson of this Sunday is placed by the Church after that of the Tenth Sunday, in order to correct that which is very liable to misconstruction in the Parable of the Unjust Steward. When we were considering that Gospel, we saw what our Lord actually did mean by it, that He neither commended the steward for being unjust, nor held forth for our imitation an example of a man making for himself friends by means of the

property of another; nor, in fact, commended anything except the steward's earnestness of purpose, and his adapting so well the means in his power to the ends that he wished to gain; telling us in this to take example from the children of this world, who in their generation, He says, are much wiser than we.

Still the parable does disclose to us a startling fact, and that is, that as riches and honours, and wealth, and power, and influence, may be used in the service of God, these are things about which even a Christian may lawfully be anxious, and do his diligence to acquire.

But every white has its black, every light its shadow, every use its abuse, every virtue its vice. Pre-eminently is this the case in the present instance. It comprehends, indeed, a whole host of virtues, directly or indirectly—prudence, industry, economy, forecast, love of children and dependents, honesty, frugality, temperance; but while it does so, it casts a blacker shadow, and becomes a greater snare, than anything that belongs to our human nature. The desire of bettering our condition has been planted in us by God Himself, it is natural to us, it is part of the very quality which mainly distinguishes us from the beasts—it is, as we have seen, the source of half our

virtues; but if it is, it is the source of half our vices also.

Now our Lord in the parable of this Sunday not only admits this fact, but gives us a rule for our guidance. Make yourselves Friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, He had said, but now He adds, yet for all that do not serve it; be masters over your riches, do not let them be masters over you: you cannot serve God and mammon; have, therefore, one single purpose of your whole life, one aim, one object, that of serving God; and if you make mammon conduce to that purpose you are not serving mammon, you are making mammon serve you; God then is your Master, but you are master of your riches. But, on the other hand, since of course you must wish to go to Heaven, if ever you let your love of riches lead you into that which will defeat your own object, and make your Heavenly Friends refuse you their Everlasting Habitations, then you are in the condition described by St. Paul, you see another law in your members warring against the law of your mind, and leading you into captivity to it; and that something is mammon. Now that which ties and binds you, and forces you to do that which you would not, is your master; mammon, therefore, is your master,

not your servant; your purpose, therefore, is no longer single, you have two masters.

What our Saviour says is, that we cannot serve them both, that we are proposing to ourselves a moral impossibility; whatever you may think of doing, or fancy you are doing, you have from thenceforward a double purpose. As Christians you have proposed to yourselves one object, and that is God. You have fixed your eyes on one point, and that is Heaven; and now you have another. He does not condemn this in so many words, but He says it is contrary to the general principle that He has laid down, singleness of purpose. You cannot have two objects at once without distracting and impairing your moral vision.

This is the lesson, and this day's Gospel is the illustration of it.

Are we, then, permitted under any circumstances to seek Heavenly riches, and earthly riches at the same time? are we to consider God and mammon in any way compatible? Of course they are. Our Lord cannot contradict Himself, and He has not only told us that we may make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, but has shown us how to do it. He now shows us the principle upon which the two are compatible.

We cannot serve God and mammon, that is

what He says here, we cannot *serve* them both, but we may follow them both, only the object must be single, and the one always in proper subordination to the other.

And, as for instances of this, you may see them every day in your lives. Ambition is a vice; covetousness is a vice; the desire of wealth and the pursuit of worldly honour, and station, and dominion, and power, are at the root of half the crimes that have been committed in the world; but if a sovereign governs well, if a statesman legislates honestly for the good of his country and the welfare of mankind, if a commander-in-chief keeps his fleet or his army in a state of high efficiency and discipline, if a country gentleman manages his estate so that his tenants and their labourers are living in happiness, if a merchant or a manufacturer conducts his affairs with probity, are we to say that these men are *serving* mammon, because wealth, and power, and high station are the objects of worldly men who have not set God before them. God's purpose with respect to us is the happiness of mankind, the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Are not people capable of carrying out God's work more efficiently in those high stations of wealth and power than they would be if they did not possess them? are

they, then, to be blamed for seeking them? It is perfectly true, wealth and high station are sought by them, just as they are sought by worldly men, or, if you will, by wicked men; but they are not their *objects* with them; they are but the means to an end; and this is the difference between the man of this world and the man of God; the man of God follows these things, follows them eagerly, and is willing to follow them, as long as they conduce to that end; but he sacrifices them, and is equally willing to sacrifice them, whenever they do not conduce to that end; to the man of this world they are themselves the end, and he sacrifices other things to them.

But in this let a man be cautious, let him look always to his real object, let him continually examine himself as to what it is. Do we seek this increase of wealth or influence for the purpose, honestly, of employing them in the service of God? if so, God is our Master, not mammon. Do we in seeking them follow strictly the paths of honour and honesty? paths like these lead to Heaven, therefore Heaven is still our object while we tread them. It does not interfere with our moral vision that other objects come within its limits besides that at which we aim; we may even make these things the means of directing our steps

more truly and more certainly, as men guide themselves by a nearer object more easily and more directly, when they have ascertained that it lies in the line on which they are moving.

We do not say that there is no danger here of self-deception; there is a very great danger; and our Lord's words point it out, and point out also the means of detecting it in ourselves. These words, if we examine them, are very peculiar. When He says no man can serve two masters, it would be sufficient, we might suppose, to add, that he will hate the one and love the other. But these are not our Saviour's words; if He had said that, no man would have applied them to himself, for no man professes to hate God, and no man professes to love the Devil. What He does say of that man is, that either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else *he will hold to the one, and despise the other*; and what he means is, "if he does not hate the Devil, and love God, whatever he may say or think, he *is holding* to the Devil while professing to hate him, and *despising* God, or setting at nought His command, while professing to love Him." There is no room for self-deception here; you know what the works of the Devil are, "the works of the flesh are manifest," are you following them, or are you not? for,

say what you will, no man can "serve two masters."

This is the rule, and now our Lord makes the application of it; He carries the illustration into ordinary and practical life. It is as if He should say, I am not proposing to you mere generalities, see how this rule works in common life. You know what mammon is, we mean riches, but do not confine this to people in high station and of great wealth, the rule is one of much more ordinary application; riches mean food, clothing, things which the very poorest are seeking after. From whom do you consider that these things come? Try yourselves by this. Who sends us food and clothing? is it God, or is it the Devil? You will *say* they come from God, but if you really do *consider* them in this light, you will not go out of God's ways to seek them. You cannot suppose that your Heavenly Father does not know that you have need of these things. He gave you your life, He gave you your body, if He gave you the greater, can you not trust Him for the less? "is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" Can you not trust Him to support the life which He gave, and the body which He created, that you go to the Devil and seek your livelihood in his ways? If you

cannot, do not deceive yourselves; you certainly are despising this Master, Whom you call your Father, which is in Heaven, but Whom you do not consider as a Father who has the will, or as a Heavenly Being who has the power, to provide for His children. To whom, then, are you really *holding* when you seek these things in unlawful ways? not to Him Who gives them, certainly, for these are not His ways. It is no test *professing* to love or *professing* to hate; apply the rule to your lives, and think whom you *are* loving or hating in this particular article of food and clothing.

“Therefore,” says our Saviour, “take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or for the body what ye shall put on.” What! take no thought, have no forecast; do not labour for your daily bread, wait, like the birds of the air, and the flowers of the field, for our Heavenly Father to nourish and sustain us in idleness! Can this be our Saviour’s meaning, when we see St. Paul, when he might well have refrained from bodily labour, still labouring with his hands, and giving commandment to the Churches to labour also; saying in so many words, that “if a man would not work, neither should he eat”—when our Lord’s own disciples carried a bag

for the purchase of needful things—when He Himself commanded the fragments of the loaves to be gathered up and stored in baskets—when an Apostle commanded provision to be made for the approaching famine, and expresses himself pleased that his commands have been attended to? This neither is nor can be His meaning; for a meaning such as this would contradict exactly the precept about making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. We should have no mammon of unrighteousness to use either well or ill.

“If you are determined,” says Augustine,* “to take this Scripture to the letter, you must at least be consistent, and carry your interpretation through. It is true you do not sow nor reap. You understand Christ literally where toil is to be avoided; but then, by the same reason, you ought to have no barns. If you will be as the birds, what mean the preparations of your food, your grinding and baking? what of your reserving aught for to-morrow?”

Take no thought for your life, our Saviour did say; but if you could only see the word as the Evangelist wrote it, you would see in it only another illustration of that rule which

* (Trench) Exposition of St. Augustine's Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount.

He had laid down, only another caution against a double object of pursuit. The word is not exactly "take no thought," as we should express it now, but "do not be divided in your minds." The word "thought" is used in the sense of care or anxiety; but even these words will not convey the full sense of the original;* it is "do not be *divided* in your mind, keep your purpose *single*." See how St. Luke renders the same passage: "Seek not," he says, "what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; neither be of *doubtful* mind." †

Now take St. James. "Let patience," he says, "have her perfect work. If any of you lack wisdom, (and wisdom is always used in the Bible as signifying the wisdom of making choice of that which is most conducive to real and eternal happiness,) let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." But, he continues, "let him ask in faith—here used in the sense of trust or confidence—nothing

* *Μέριμνα* comes to signify care, only inasmuch as it is derived from *μερίς* a part, through *μεριξεν*, to divide or distract; it is that which gives the mind a double object, and thus is opposed to the single eye of which our Lord has been speaking.

† *Μη μετεωριξεσθε*, do not be shifted [in your minds] from side to side.

wavering, nothing hesitating," (*διακρινόμενος*).—it is the same idea throughout—for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed about. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A wavering man has two purposes; he is not seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness *first*; he has no promise, therefore, that anything shall be added unto him.

This is a much more extensive doctrine than it seems. That part of it which we find so difficult to realise is not that God is the Lord of Heaven; this we admit readily; but as Heaven seems always a long way off, we do not think much about it: the doctrine is, that the earth also is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and that if we wish to have the things which this world prizes, the best and surest way of seeking them is from Him who, being Lord of all things, is Lord of this world and those things which we seek. We are to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. It really is natural so to do. We have only to put in practice our own theory. A man feels himself weak, and sees his need of help, what must he do? The answer is, Pray to God. He is in doubt; Pray to God. He is under temptation or trial; Pray to God. And so also as to things of this world ex-

clusively; misfortune comes upon Him; Pray to God. Health or wealth departs from him; Pray to God.

Is not this the invariable answer that we should receive from every one who calls himself a Christian, were we seriously and solemnly to put the question to him under any of the above-named circumstances, or, I might add, under any circumstances whatever? It would seem, then, that by a man's own confession and his own natural feelings, whatever was his condition in life, whether prosperity, or adversity, or grief, or doubt, or pain, or health, or sickness, prayer was his invariable resource.

And so it is. Nature itself assures us of it. No one denies it. But this admission involves a doctrine which men do not so readily realise, the doctrine of a special providence, not only that God governs the general course of the world, but that He governs all the details of it. We do not pray for that which He to whom we pray is not in the habit of granting. "What is it to ask in faith?" The person praying must be in a state of believing; the petitioner must be a believer; the thing asked for must be an object of faith by being the subject matter of

* Ford.

some promise; a fervent prayer for that which God never promised is a foul sin." But He has promised in so many words, *all these things shall be added unto you*. But "the manner of asking must be faithful, with a pure intention of God's glory, with a cheerful submission to God's will, with a faithful reliance on God's promise, with fervency and warmth of spirit; he that would prevail like Jacob, must wrestle like Jacob for his blessing." Let not the man that wavereth think to receive anything of the Lord. If he does, it is more than could be expected, because it is more than God has promised. Doubting in prayer is provocation to God; and when a man's prayer is a provocation, how can he expect that his prayer should be either heard or answered.

But if doubting in mind interferes with singleness of purpose, still more does it interfere with it that the petitioner does not act as he prays. Take no thought for to-morrow, and yet pray for to-morrow—it is a contradiction in terms.

Not if the purpose be single, not if the proper subordination be kept up.

Who, then, is it that really lives according to the spirit of the precepts which our Saviour has given us in this Gospel? St. Augustine

shall tell us. "It is he who is confident that if by infirmity or other cause he is cut off from his work, he shall indeed be fed without his toil, as the birds are, and clothed as the lilies ; but with health and strength and opportunity, knows that *these* are God's appointed means whereby he shall receive things needful for the body, yet thinks not, because he works for his livelihood, that it is any other than God who does truly feed and clothe him now ; who knows that it is the solicitude, not the labour, which he is relieved from—that it is the doubt whether God could, if need were, provide for us in any other way, which is forbidden by our Lord in this Gospel, and the feeling that it is any other except only He who does ever, and under every circumstance, whether He permits us to labour, or whether he does not permit us to labour, provide for our daily wants, and give us our daily bread."

"We do not tell you," he says, "not to pray to God for temporal blessings ; for the health of your bodies, for the peace of your times, for the abundance of your harvests. Pray for them ; you ought to ask them of God ; but put them in the second place or the third place of your prayers, so that the welfare of your souls, and the longing for eternal life,

may still keep the first place, and be the object of all your prayers." "Seek ye first the kingdom of Heaven and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

H.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE CHOICE OF MASTERS.

Ephesians, iii. 17, 18, 19.

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with the fulness of God.”

THIS Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity seems a break in the teaching of the Seasons. It contains no lesson of duty whatever; the Gospel is, indeed, the narrative of a very great miracle, one of the greatest, at all events one of the most public, which our Saviour ever performed; but it seems to be simply a narrative, a manifestation, indeed, of Almighty Power exercised over death, an earnest, it may be, that He who raised the widow's son, has not only the power, but the will to raise us also—a ground of thankfulness, and of

wonder, and of adoration, but not a lesson of duty.

Neither is any such lesson conveyed in the Epistle. St. Paul having in the first verse alluded to the tribulations he was then undergoing at Rome, and having desired the Ephesians not to be discouraged on account of his sufferings, puts up to God a most affectionate prayer that his converts might be strengthened to meet the trials which were awaiting them. But neither does this appear a lesson of duty; we may no doubt apply to ourselves in our own trials that which the Apostle addresses to his converts in theirs, but this seems a matter of faith rather than of duty, a something that God is to do for us, rather than anything we are to do for God; so that the whole subject seems to belong to the doctrinal part of the year rather than to the practical. Taken singly, it is so; and I have before pointed out how impossible it is, even were we so inclined, to separate doctrine from practice, faith from works, cause from effect. Our Christian Seasons are simply an arrangement of the Church, presenting these things to our minds in the order in which we can most conveniently comprehend them; and this order is generally, first repentance, then faith, then obedience; first to renounce, then

to believe, lastly to do; but though this is the general arrangement, we cannot avoid a continual recurrence to the principles upon which the whole superstructure is built; and that groundwork is, on God's part revelation, and on our part faith.

This Sixteenth Sunday is in reality no break at all in the series; in itself, indeed, it inculcates no particular duty; it must be taken in connexion with the preceding Sunday, and be considered as part of its subject, singleness of purpose. "You cannot serve two masters," said our Lord; you must of necessity make your choice, and serve either one or the other; not only renounce the Devil, as you have promised to do, but see that you also love God with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. If you do not, whatever you may think, you will be found "holding" to the Devil in your works, even while you profess to renounce him, and in your souls you will be "despising" God, even while you are honouring Him with your lips. Make your choice, then, for a choice must be made; there is no serving God with half a heart; in this world it is distraction and wretchedness, and it is in no way conducive to happiness in the next.

This is the first step to convince us of the

necessity of making a choice at all, to point out to us that most common and most deadly snare which the Devil holds out to us—the possibility of our making a compact with him, of serving him up to a certain point and in certain particulars, while we continue to profess ourselves soldiers and servants of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But we *do* see this; we *are* driven, either by conviction or by circumstances, to make our choice; the question now comes directly before us, “If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.” This is the step at which we may be supposed to have arrived on this present Sunday.

Is it so clear that, if we are driven to make a choice, and to declare whom we will serve, our choice will really be the Lord God? Is it so clear that we shall be convinced, *and act on the conviction*, that if we do determine to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things, which we not only so much desire, but which are so very necessary for our present wants, will be added to us?

Of course there can be no doubt of it, so far as reasoning and theory go, but, we are in the practical half of the year now, we must examine our consciences, and see how our outward acts and inward feelings square with

these theoretical convictions. We are quite certain, we say, that God is Almighty, that God is our Father, that our Father knows our wants, and that He is able and willing to provide for them; we *say* so, but how do we show this?

It is only in times of trial that we are called upon to show it, or that we have any possibility of showing it. Then let us place ourselves in the situation of these Ephesians, to whom St. Paul was writing, and perhaps we shall be able to see why he writes so earnestly to them, and whether the same prayer and the same warning are not as much adapted to certain passages in our own lives, as ever they were to those to whom this epistle was addressed.

Hitherto the Church of Ephesus had been a prosperous and flourishing Church; the Lord had added to their numbers largely, and after their first difficulties in the matter of Demetrius, they had prospered exceedingly, meeting with few or no trials; they had also gone beyond all other Churches which St. Paul had founded in purity of faith and doctrine; theirs is the only Church to which in his Epistles he conveys no reproof. We see also from the Acts of the Apostles that they were much attached to their teacher, who had indeed bestowed

upon them a large portion of his time, having been with them for two years.

But that teacher was now in bonds, in great danger of his life; very shortly afterwards he actually did lose his life, and that for making this very choice between God and the world. A persecution was even then awaiting them, and it could hardly fail but that, besides the trials of martyrdom and actual suffering for Christ's sake, all must meet with discouragements, and these not only or chiefly from without, but from faint-hearted brethren, from traitors and renegades among their own members—trials in reality harder to bear than positive and actual suffering.

All this is a severe test of men's faith. Can it be, we should say, that the Lord cares for His people, or is able to save His people, when even His most faithful servants, those who have given up all for Him, are suffering for His sake, and He does nothing to deliver them? If they are establishing His Church, and He, the Omnipotent, wills that His Church be established, why does He turn away His countenance from those who are spending their lives in His service? Is it want of will, or want of power? Have we made so wise a choice after all? We have given up much for Christ's sake, we are ready to give up much,

we would suffer for Him, but we are doing nothing by our sufferings, the cause is going back, the world is too powerful for us, it is hopeless.

Let us go back a few verses beyond the Epistle for the day, and we shall understand St. Paul's argument. The Ephesians had already made the wise choice between the two masters—they were serving God. To confirm them in this choice under trial, is the Apostle's object. He tells them plainly that there is a mystery in it, something that is hard to be understood, and which the uninitiated cannot understand; he says that from the beginning of the world this mystery had been hid in God, who indeed had created all things in this Jesus Christ, whom they had engaged themselves to serve, but who had hitherto never revealed Him; that in this mystery were unsearchable riches, and that he, Paul, had been selected by God and made a minister for the purpose of disclosing these things to them.

"Wherefore," he says, "I desire that ye faint not at my tribulation *for you*, which is your glory."

"How is it *for them*?" says Chrysostom. "How is it their glory? It is because God so loved *them* as to give even His Son for them,

and to afflict His servants. It was in order that they might attain so many blessings that St. Paul was in prison. Surely this was from God's exceeding love towards *them*. It is also what God saith concerning His prophets, 'I have slain them by the word of My mouth.' "

So far, therefore, as you are concerned, he would say, there is not only no reason why you should be distressed at hearing of my sufferings, but you have every ground to conclude from them that you are of exceeding great consequence in God's eyes, when you see how ready He is to sacrifice me His servant for the more confirmation of your faith in this mystery. As for myself, to whom this mystery has been revealed, so convinced am I that "this light affliction, which endureth but for a moment, worketh for me a far more exceeding weight of glory," that I am quite ready to become a martyr in order that you may be convinced; "for this cause I bow my knees to Him of whom the whole family of Heaven and earth is named," praying, not that He would remove this trial from me or from you, but only that He would strengthen you, only that He would open your eyes that you may see (what all we His saints do see) the extent of His love. He admits that this love passeth knowledge,

that it is altogether beyond the power of our natural comprehension; and, therefore, he prays that Christ would supernaturally grant them the power of seeing it—and this, He says, can only be done by actual trial, actual experience. Christ must *dwell* in our hearts by faith, we must be rooted and grounded in love. It is as if He should say, it is by your own experience, your own inward conviction, not by anything that I can tell you of Christ's love, that you will be able to comprehend what the saints do comprehend, "what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height," to know perfectly the mystery which has been providentially ordered in our behalf, (for this is what he calls the breadth, and length, and depth, and height,) that is to know the immensity of God's love, and how it extends everywhere. He exemplifies it by the visible dimensions of solid bodies, the whole of which we are physically incapable of seeing at a single view, though we are convinced by experience that they do exist. "He comprehends it, as it were," says St. Chrysostom, "within an upper, and under, and sides. I have thus spoken, he would say, yet it is not for any words of mine to teach you these things, that must be the work of the Holy Spirit. By His might, says he, ye must be

strengthened against the trials that await you, and remain unshaken; there is no other way to be strengthened but by the Holy Ghost, and by trials."

Thus, and thus only, will you be filled with "all the fulness of God. What he means is this, although the love of Christ lies above the reach of all human knowledge, yet shall ye know it, if ye shall have Christ dwelling in you; not only shall ye know from Him this, but ye shall be filled with the fulness of God."*

I cannot explain this, St. Paul would say, but I, the prisoner of the Lord, write it to you. You must, till you have made trial of it yourselves, take it on my word and on my experience. This is St. Paul's object in distinguishing himself by the term prisoner, which he does frequently in his Epistles,† and this is the sense in which it has been said that the blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church. This, indeed, is the very meaning of the word martyr; they are the witnesses to the power of faith, they convince men of the reality of unseen things, not by arguments, but by the evidence of their senses, by showing the effects of the Unseen in their own persons, and this

* Chrysostom.

† See Epistle to Philemon, i. 9. 2 Tim. i. 8.

evidence is far more powerful than that of miracles. "Marvellous, truly marvellous," says St. Chrysostom, "are the very handkerchiefs and aprons from his body working wonders," and yet not so marvellous as those words, "when they had beaten him, and laid many stripes on him, they cast him into prison." And again, "being in bonds, they sang praises to God." And again, "having stoned him, they drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead." Would ye know how mighty a thing (towards conviction) is an iron chain for Christ's sake bound about His servant's body, hearken to what Christ Himself says: "Blessed are ye." Why? when ye shall raise the dead? No. But why? when ye shall heal the blind? Nothing like it. But why, then? "When they shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake." Now if to be evil spoken of renders men thus blessed, to be evil entreated, what may not that achieve? Hearken to what this blessed Saint saith elsewhere: "Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. And yet more glorious than the crown is this chain; of this, he saith, the Lord will count me worthy, I am in no wise solicitous about the other. Enough it is for me for

every recompense to suffer evil for Christ's sake. Let Him but grant me to say, "I fill up what is behind of the afflictions of Christ," and I have not a want.

This is the argument of this Sunday's lesson. You are compelled to make your choice, it would say, between these two masters; the one holds out to you all sorts of allurements, his way is a broad way, and an easy way, and many there be that go in thereat; the way of the other is strait and narrow, the path steep and difficult; you will have few companions, and fewer inducements; but do not hesitate in your choice, you will not suffer greater hardships than St. Paul, and he, Paul, "the prisoner of the Lord," beseeches you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.

In support of this line of argument we have for our Gospel the raising of the widow's son at Nain. We must always consider the miracles of our Lord, no less than His parables, as so many lessons. In their primary use, perhaps, as proofs of His Godhead, we may not ourselves need them; they are proofs certainly, and we like to contemplate them as such, but we possess so many others, that we might easily dispense with them. To us they are lessons, possibly they were lessons also

to those who saw them. There were many who died in Israel during the time of our Lord's ministry besides Jairus's daughter, and Lazarus, and this the widow's son, yet these three are all, so far as we know, that our Saviour raised from the dead. He must have had some reason for this preference ; we may be sure that in every miracle He performs, He has some special object, and that whenever it is recorded by His Evangelists, it is recorded for our learning.

Let us see, therefore, in what particular this miracle differs from all others, that it should be selected for the teaching of this Sunday. Compare it with the two others we have mentioned. He does not raise either Jairus's daughter, or even Lazarus, His friend, without much entreaty, and without a full confession of faith ; again, most of His greater miracles are performed, not in public, but before a chosen few. In the case of Jairus's daughter He expressly puts forth all except His own three disciples, and the father and mother of the damsel ; and it is only a few of the Jews, relations, probably, of Martha and Mary, who attended Him at the grave of Lazarus. But here it is recorded, and in a very marked manner, too, that there were

going with Him *many* of His disciples and *much people*, and when He drew nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow ; *much people* of the city was with her. You will remark, also, that as there was no previous act of faith on the part of the bystanders, so there was no act of prayer on the part of the Lord ; it is the most absolute and manifest act of the uncontrolled Godhead recorded in the sacred history ; it is the mere compassion, the mere Will of the Lord, uninfluenced by any external circumstance whatever ; there is simply the act ; He touches the bier, and, as if the principle of life passed from Him into the dead body by the touch, at His word the dead sat up ; and it is manifest, not in secret, but before the world. This is the point in which the miracle in question bears upon the lesson of this Sunday ; it discloses, in the first place, the absolute Omnipotence of the Master whom we are invited to choose. But the principal point of it all is our Lord's compassion ; there is nothing whatever in the circumstances of the case, so far as we are told, which has drawn the Lord's attention to it, except the affliction of the mother ; those circumstances which heighten

this affliction are carefully recorded. "He was the only son of his mother," we are told, and "she was a widow;" and immediately upon this it is added, the Lord saw her, and had compassion upon her; it was, therefore, her very affliction, and nothing except her affliction, which was the cause of her joy—not that our Lord would wish us to understand that in any case prayer is unavailable, but that He would divest this particular case of all accessories whatever, in order to impress upon us the single idea of His compassion, that He has not only the power, but the will, to wipe away all tears, and to add to those who seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all the blessings and comforts of this life.

The Gospel of the day supplies us, as it were, with that which is in the Epistle understood and unseen. In the Epistle it is, "I, Paul, sufferer as I am for the Lord's sake, beseech you to make the choice that I have made. For even while I suffer in consequence of it, I am convinced that I have made a right choice." He does not tell us the grounds upon which he made it, but here the Gospel takes it up, and gives us, as it were, his thoughts. I know, he would say, from what has been recorded there, that the

very fact of my sufferings has drawn the Lord's attention to me, that my sufferings are, as it were, a prayer in themselves ; I know that He has the power by one single word to change my cross into a crown, and I feel certain that what He has done for the widow of Nain is but a sample of what He does for me and for all, and an exemplification of His own promise, "Ye now have sorrow," He said, "but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

But there is a deeper and more spiritual meaning in this day's Gospel ; there are other afflictions besides those of the body, and other death besides natural death. This last, indeed, the Scripture speaks of rather as sleep than death: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," said our Lord. What God calls death is a state of sin, not the separation of the soul from the body, but the separation of the soul from God. Take the narrative in this sense, and the whole becomes typical. The widow is the Church, weeping for her lost son ; the widow's son is the Christian, dead in trespasses and sins ; the bier is a numbed and deadened conscience ; the bearers, man's own evil habits, which are fast carrying him to his spiritual grave, and this is out-

side the city—outside the ark of Christ's Church.

It is here that Christ meets the dead man; it is here that He commands those who are carrying him to his eternal grave to stop, and they stop at His bidding; it is here that He touches the bier, touches his conscience, and through that conscience communicates to him of His divine Power—the power of a New Life. He says to him, “Young man, I say unto thee, arise.” In this power the dead sits up, and thus He gives again her lost child to his weeping mother, the Church. “No one,” says St. Augustine, “awakens another so readily from his bed as Christ does from the grave.” “And what is that grave,” said St. Ambrose before him, “but *evil morals*? From this sepulchre Christ delivereth thee; from this grave shalt thou rise again if thou hear the Word of God. And if thy sin be so grievous that thou canst not wash it out with the tears of thine own repentance, let thy mother, the Church, intercede for thee, who intercedes in behalf of each as a widow for her only son, sympathizing with spiritual grief when she sees her children borne to the grave by deadly sins. Let the Holy Mother weep, and much people stand by sympathizing with the good parent. Now from thy bier shalt

thou arise; now from the sepulchre shalt thou be delivered. The attendants that were bearing thee shall stand still. Thou shalt begin to speak the words of Life—all shall fear, for by the example of one shall many be reformed. They shall praise God, who has granted us such remedies for escaping death.”

“What widow weeping for an only son can feel that bitterness which the sinner ought to feel for his own soul?” Take it in this sense, then, and the miracle applies to every lapsed Christian; it applies to every one who, having once been a citizen of God’s Kingdom, is in danger of being carried out of it dead in trespasses and sins; it *may* apply to every one of us, and that at any time of our lives. The collect, therefore, appeals to the “*continual* pity” of Him of Whom the whole Family in Heaven and earth is named, that it may cleanse and defend this Family; and we pray, because it cannot *continue* in safety without His succour, that He would *preserve it* evermore by His help and goodness. “Leave us not, O Lord,” it would say, “to be buried in forgetfulness of Thee, ‘for the dead cannot praise Thee,’ but come and meet us by Thy Providence, and touch the bier. Let us hear Thy consoling Voice, and be strengthened

by Thy grace again to rise, that, as by a miracle we are made partakers of the first Resurrection, we may become partakers of the second also, and hear Thy marvellous Voice, after which there shall be no second death.”*

H.

* Williams.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE VOCATION WHEREWITH WE ARE CALLED.

Ephesians, iv. 1, 2, 3.

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

IN order to understand the lesson of this Sunday, which is, that we walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we were called, we must examine what that vocation is; and in order to do that, we must turn to our Lord's great commandment, “Love one another,” which gives to Maundy Thursday its very singular name.* This is the vocation, this it is which distinguishes Christians from all other people. “By this,” says our Saviour, “shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.” And it was so. “See how

* Dies Mandati, the Day of the Commandment.

these Christians love one another," was the extorted and unwilling remark of a heathen during the days of their most grievous persecution.

St. Paul calls this a vocation or calling—the word means an invitation—an invitation to share in the joys of Heaven. We shall see this, and see also why St. Paul speaks of it as a vocation, if we look at the narrative itself. Our Lord was comforting His disciples on the evening before His death, and to this end He speaks of that which was so soon to take place, not as death, but as a departure—a happy removal to a place where mortal bodies do not enter. "Ye shall seek Me," He said, "and, as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come; so *now*, for the present, that is, I say unto you, that even you cannot follow Me." * Immediately upon this, He proceeds

* This is more evident in the original languages, *ὁμῖν λέγω* APTI, Vobis dico *Modo*. And it is quite certain that the Apostles understood our Lord to mean, not that He now told them that they could not follow Him, but that He told them that they could not follow Him *now*; for after He had explained the way in which they were to qualify themselves for following Him at some future, but as yet undetermined time, Peter, always zealous and affectionate, yet often inconsiderate and rash, exclaims, "Lord, why cannot I follow Thee *now*? I am ready to die for Thy sake." And our Lord Himself tells him that he cannot follow Him *now*, but that he shall afterwards.

to teach them how they are to qualify themselves for following Him.

You must remember that this conversation takes place immediately after that type of daily sanctification, the washing of the disciples' feet; we must distinguish between this and the One Baptism for the remission of sins, foreshadowed as well as instituted by His own Baptism at the hand of John. The disciples had been already baptised, and had thereby cast their lot with Him; the act indeed is not mentioned, but, as St. Augustine observes, it is implied; as Christ baptised by means of His disciples, it is evident that those who conveyed Baptism must have been baptised themselves. Accordingly, He checks the indiscreet zeal of Peter by reminding him of this: "He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean, every whit." This points out the distinction between Baptism and sanctification. "The whole man," says Augustine, "is washed in Baptism, but, living in the world afterwards, we tread upon the earth. Those human affections, then, without which we cannot live in the world, are, as it were, the feet which connect us with human things; these must rest upon the earth, so that if we say that we have no sin, that is to say, if we say that by Baptism we are once

and for all freed from all taint of earth, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, He Who washed His disciples' feet forgives us our sins, even down to our feet, (our human affections,) wherewith we hold converse with earth;" or, in other words, He sanctifies us daily, repairing that which has been daily decayed by the fraud and malice of the Devil and by our own carnal will, washing away through the operation of the Holy Ghost the daily stains which we must contract by our passage through this world, with its unavoidable ties and affections.

We shall now better understand the nature of the "vocation wherewith we are called"—the invitation by which we are invited to Heaven. Having done this, our Lord says, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." How *new*? Does not the old law say, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?" How, then, does our Lord call His a new commandment?

Because, under His sanctification, we love ourselves after a new manner; and thus, if we exercise the old commandment, we exercise it with a new motive, and after a new manner, because it is now the love of our neighbour exercised under divine sanctifica-

tion; and that such love as this strips us of the old man, that is, selfishness, and puts on the new Man, that is, Christ. Love does this; the Lord does not say now, love to God, but love to our neighbour, for with such a motive the two are identical. "The second is like unto it," for, "inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these, My brethren, ye have done it unto Me;" and thus it is that you see our Lord distinguishes this from all carnal affection, such as might exist without sanctification. He defines the quality of the love such as it is in Christians; it is now, "As I have loved you, that ye love one another." "Not the love with which men love one another," says Augustine, "but that of the children of the Most High God, who would be brethren of the only-begotten Son, and, therefore, love one another with the love wherewith He loved them, and would lead them to the fulfilment of their desires."

This is the precept given in the Epistle of this day, while the Gospel furnishes us with examples or instances showing the manner in which we ought to behave and to feel under such and such given circumstances, as a sample of the feelings which ought to actuate us under all circumstances, so as to promote that unity which the Epistle speaks of as indis-

pensable to us all, as Christians and as brethren in Christ.

This Epistle is taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, and we must remember that it is addressed to a Church more perfect and more advanced in the principles of Christianity and holiness than any of the others to which St. Paul ever wrote; it was indeed a Church to which he had himself given very particular attention, and we may easily imagine that they had profited by it, when we see that the whole Epistle contains no blame, nor complaint, nor reproof whatever—that it deals with higher mysteries and holier motives than any other Epistle, and that its sole object appears to be confirming advanced Christians in the true faith and practice of the Gospel.

Under these considerations, therefore, the exhortation at the opening of this day's Epistle comes with additional force: "I, therefore," he says, "the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye were called. Seeing that the riches of God's grace in Christ have so abounded towards you, who were once Ephesian idolators, but who are now converted Christians, (men who have received an invitation, or call, or vocation, to meet your Lord in Heaven), I, Paul, who am a prisoner for

preaching these glad tidings, and for declaring this grace to you, do most affectionately exhort you that you live answerably to this vocation, and according to the obligation of your high and holy calling from heathenism to Christianity."* You seem to understand how high and how holy that vocation is—show that you do so by living worthy of it.

He then goes on to tell them how they would be living worthy of it, and that it was by living in lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, or not allowing themselves to be easily provoked, but forbearing one another in love, and by endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Evidently the whole of this is a comment on the great commandment, "that ye love one another." Our Lord had defined it generally by the words, "As I have loved you." St. Paul tells us how He did love us, and how we ought, if we would do as He has done, to love one another. He was our King, yet He came to us in lowliness and meekness; we had offended our King, but He was long-suffering; He forebore us in love, and His last prayer for us was, "Keep, through Thine own Name, whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be ONE, as We are:" this is how our Lord loved

* Ford.

us; this is how He explained His own command by His actions; and thus it is that St. Paul recounts them to us. Christian love, the vocation wherewith we were called, must be distinguished from all other love by lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, mutual forbearance, and what all these things must lead to and centre in, unity of spirit, which is the bond of peace.

In the Gospel we have an example of what the Apostle means, or rather two examples, one of that which we must follow, and one of that which we must guard ourselves against. We see an instance of lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, and forbearance in love, in the conduct of our Saviour, and of the opposites to these qualities in that of the Lawyers and Pharisees.

First, there is our Saviour's act; it is an act of love and kindness; He is doing what must be evident to all is an act of kindness and beneficence; He is healing a man afflicted with the dropsy. So far, then, the Church holds out to us a general example. Seek out, she would say, means of doing good; do not wait for convenient times of doing it, but seize the opportunity whenever it occurs, for so did Christ.

But here is an example of another kind.

This happens at the house of one of the chief Pharisees, whither our Lord had gone to eat bread. It may seem singular to us that He should have received an invitation of this kind from those persons who, on all occasions, were His opponents. But to judge of their feelings towards our Lord, we must forget that He is the Lord God, and consider Him for the moment, as they must have considered Him, as a poor man of humble birth, who, by some means, has acquired the art of performing wonderful cures, and other miracles. We have other instances besides this of our Lord's dining with these people; but on no occasion does this appear to be a mark of respect or attention. On one occasion we find Him reproaching His host with a neglect of the common courtesies of Eastern life, the kiss of welcome, and the water to wash His feet. It seems to have been rather as rich men in our own days sometimes invite remarkable characters to their table, though, while they do so, they do not consider them as belonging to their society. It was partly from ostentation, partly for their own entertainment, and that of their friends, because they expected to see some miracle.

Even while they received Him at meat they were jealous, they were watching Him,

they were hoping to entangle Him, so as to betray Him; not indeed outwardly—for this would be a deep offence against the laws of Eastern hospitality, so deep as to have disgraced them—but they were watching Him secretly notwithstanding. And His answer conveys a far greater reproof than anything that appears on the surface. It was an answer to their thoughts; it showed them that He understood their treachery. “Is it lawful,” He said, “to heal on the Sabbath-day?” They held their peace; they saw that He knew what they were thinking of. In all probability they were ashamed, yet were too proud to confess their breach of hospitality. The Lord forbears; He does not press the matter; He is satisfied with having quietly conveyed the reproof to those who knew what their own thoughts were; He makes no display, but He takes the man, and heals him, and lets him go, and then is satisfied with explaining from their own law the principles on which He acted, justifying quietly His own conduct, but leaving them to make and apply the inference. What we are to remark in it is, the kind and conciliating conduct of One who would take no occasion to offend.

And the Church, by selecting this particular passage to illustrate this particular precept of

the Epistle, would say to us, See how you must behave as Christians when you are in the world, and associating, as you must associate, with the mixed characters, the good and the bad, which the world contains. Love all, as Christ loved all, and seek out occasions of doing kindness; be not like these Pharisees and Lawyers, ready and anxious to put the worst construction upon what you see others do. Guard yourselves from jealousy; it will lead you into thoughts that you would be ashamed to have seen and known. And if you meet with men who have not the Christian spirit—and you must meet with such if you live in the world at all—then be like Christ on this particular occasion, forbear. If you are right, do not press your victory so as to make your opponents ashamed. You love them, and you would not inflict a wanton or unnecessary pain upon them; and do not be above justifying yourselves even when you are right, and your opponents obstinately and perversely in the wrong. Do not be above conciliating, and giving your reasons, and showing your authority, to those even who have no right to ask it. Endeavour thus to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Do this because you are Christians, for you see Christ did.

The concluding portion of the Gospel affords us a precept to the same effect; it conveys, indeed, as we shall see, a deeper and more typical meaning than simply a piece of advice on our conduct in society; but this, at all events, is its primary sense.

The Pharisees, we may remember, were a very exclusive sect. They had always considered themselves, and had hitherto been considered by others, as more holy, more pure than other men. They were the religious world of Jerusalem. Originally they had been the predominant party in politics, and still had very great influence; but at this time they were beginning to lose their political supremacy, which was passing over to their rivals, the Sadducees, the free-thinkers and liberals of ancient times, which party was then rapidly creeping into power.

This, as we may readily imagine, was a very fruitful source of jealousy; and we find our Lord more than once availing Himself of this feeling, in order to put one or other of the parties to silence, as St. Paul did afterwards to save his own life.

This will account for the occasion on which this piece of instruction was given. The Pharisees, in whose company our Lord then was, had begun to be very sore that their

hitherto acknowledged superiority had begun to be questioned. Our Lord, therefore, makes this state of things a farther illustration to His own maxim of Love, shown by mutual forbearance. "You feel offended," He says, "with the presumption of men who take the highest seats from you; you are yourselves eager and jealous about it. You have lately received some rebuffs; learn from this how to promote good feeling by doing yourselves the very opposite to that conduct which has produced such soreness. Be lowly; be humble; do not stand upon your own estimation of yourselves, but leave it to the master of the feast to make his own selection from among his own guests, and to arrange their precedence. Wait in the lowest rooms, you will lose nothing by it, and you will besides be promoting that mutual love which ought always to subsist among brethren.

This is our Lord's instruction, but there is something beyond this. You will observe it is called a parable; now a parable is something that contains a hidden meaning beyond that which appears on the surface.

Who is that MASTER OF THE FEAST who bade thee and him? What is that Feast to which you are both bidden? The Epistle for the day shall answer it. There is one Body and

one Spirit, to which you are called, *bidden*, in one hope of your calling; there is One Catholic Church, of which you all are members, and that Church sanctified by One Holy Spirit; this is the Feast, and all who are admitted to it have one and the same hope or object. One and the same Lord bade thee and him, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of this Church, the Master of this Feast, the Saviour of the Body; there is but one Faith for all, the very humblest hope for inheritance among the Saints in light, and the very greatest can do no more; there is but one door by which all enter alike, the one Baptism for the remission of sins. Jew and Gentile, bond and free, rich and poor, we are all one in Jesus Christ, by one Spirit baptised into one Body; and there is one God and Father of all things, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all. If this is the Feast, this is He Who bade us.

Are we, then, who have no right to sit down at God's Feast, are we, who have no claim to be admitted at all, and who are admitted only through the grace and mercy of Him who bade us, are we to contend for the highest seats, not satisfied with that state of life to which God has called us? Is it not enough for us that we are "the Body of Christ and members in

particular," that we should rend that Body, and break that unity by our own jealousies, and strifes, and divisions? "God hath set some in His Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues," "and even, as in these great gifts," says St. Chrysostom, "God hath not vouchsafed all to all men, but some to this, and others to that, so also does He in respect of the less, not setting in these either any above all. And this He did, building up thereby great abundance of harmony and love, that each one, standing in need of the other, might be brought close to his brother. Covet earnestly as you will the best gifts, yet, says the Apostle, I can show you a more excellent way."

And that way is Charity, or, as he calls it when writing to the Ephesians in our Epistle for this day, "the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

This, then, is the Apostle's argument. "Seeing ye are all members of one Body, partakers of one Spirit, expectants of one Hope, having one Lord and common Saviour, one Faith and Belief, one and the same Baptism in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, one and the same God

and Father in Christ, seeing that you are one in all these particulars, be one among yourselves, and endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; learn that so many are the obligations, so strong the bonds and ties which lie upon all the members of the Church to be at unity among themselves, of one judgment, and of one heart, that such as violate these bonds, and culpably divide and separate themselves from communion with their brethren, Christ looks upon as no longer members of His Body, but as having rent themselves from it."*

Pride is at the root of all division; the ground of the whole is, that we do not consider ourselves esteemed and ranked according to our merits, and that we choose out the chief rooms, like the Pharisees, instead of waiting till the Master of the Feast shall give us those places which He considers most fitting for us, as well as for the general order and arrangement of His House. He may permit this now, for this, as all other states in which we are placed, or in which we place ourselves, are our trials; but when He Who bade us all cometh, then we shall find that everyone who exalts himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be ex-

* Ford.

alted. These words are spoken according to divine judgment, not according to human experience. Here they who desire after earthly glory often obtain it, they who are humble and content often remain inglorious. These words are not for the children of this world; they do come true even in this world frequently, but he who expects their fulfilment invariably will be disappointed. It is not consistent with God's providence that it should be so; were it so, pride and humility would be no longer trials and tests of character. It is not to these that the Preacher speaks, when he says, "The greater thou art, humble thyself in all things," (Eccles. iii. 18.) nor a greater than he when He says, "blessed are the meek," "blessed are the poor in spirit." To sit quiet and contented in the lowest room is a trial of faith, and we must abide it patiently, satisfied that He Who bade us all will come, and will not tarry. "Whenever He does, then," says Bede, "whomsoever He shall find humble, He will exalt, blessing him with the name of Friend, for whosoever humbleth himself as a little child he is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. But it is well said, *then* shalt thou have glory; thou mayest not begin to seek *now* what is kept for thee at the end; it may be in this life, often does God come

to His marriage feast here, despising the proud, and giving to the humble such great gifts of His Spirit, that the assembly of those who sit at meat, the faithful here on earth, glorify Him in wonder. Still not everyone who exalts himself before men, even in spiritual things, is abased, nor is he who humbleth himself in their sight exalted by them; but whosoever exalteth himself because of his merits, the Lord shall bring low, and him who humbleth himself on account of His mercies the Lord shall exalt."

H.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE RICHES OF GRACE.

1 Cor. i. 4.

"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by Him."

ST. PAUL tells the Corinthians that in every thing they are enriched by the grace of God given them by Jesus Christ. Let us examine the full meaning of these words.

In this instance you see that St. Paul is not thanking God that the Lord had given the Corinthians any particular thing which they had not before. As Christians they had, of course, received new and peculiar gifts; and of these the Apostle speaks frequently in other places; but this is not what he is speaking of here. What he says is, "they are *enriched in every thing*," meaning evidently that every thing they had before has received now a new value. They had the

thing before, no doubt, but that same thing is now spiritualized, and, if we may use the term, Christianized.

This is the doctrine of the Sunday, and the Gospel shows us the same by an example, the Commandments. They were of God; they had existed long before Christ's coming in the flesh. There they were still, those same Commandments. Even now that Christ was come, they were in no way changed. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." The Commandments themselves were not changed, but the sense in which they were to be taken was changed; it was a broader, fuller, more complete sense than they had borne heretofore. The Commandments were "enriched," and this is one of those things for which the Apostle thanks God.

How they were enriched we may see from the Sermon on the Mount. And this will form a good instance of the difference between the law of bondage and the law of liberty, the old covenant and the new, the treating us as "servants," and the treating us "as sons." The original commandment was stern, hard, definite, and decisive: "Thou shalt do no murder;" "thou shalt not steal;" "thou shalt

not covet." Even when it speaks of God, the tenor of it is much the same: "Thou shalt have none other gods but Me;" "thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image;" "remember that thou keep holy." It is the stern, authoritative command which a master gives his servants: "I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."

Beyond the general motive that these were the commands of the God who had brought out those whom He thus commanded "from the land of Egypt and the house of bondage," there is nothing about love, or thankfulness, or personal gratitude. No doubt the deliverance from the house of bondage is typical; and in its typical meaning it affected every individual of the chosen race. But of that those who were called upon to keep the commandments could understand little. Their gratitude, if they felt it, was on account of an historical, not a personal blessing; and their chief moving power was fear, and not love.

These were the commandments under the law of bondage; but when the Lord had disclosed to us a new covenant, He, preserving the very same commandment for the rule and

guidance of His followers, gave the motive power of them all.

Thou shalt LOVE the Lord thy God.

“Fear,” says St. Thomas Aquinas “belongs to slaves—love to sons. Fear is a compulsion, love is a freedom. Whoso serves God in fear escapes punishment, but has not the reward of righteousness, because he did well unwillingly. God does not desire to be served servilely by man, as a master, but to be loved as a father, for that He has given the Spirit of Adoption to men.”

This is called the “law of liberty” by the Apostles. In one sense, it is, no doubt, far more lax than that of the Old Testament, which, therefore, they call “the law of bondage;” but in another it is far more stringent. The one binds the body, the other the soul, heart, and mind. The law of bondage says, “Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.” The law of liberty, relaxing the letter of that commandment, renders it impossible for man to put it aside, by substituting for it, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.” The law of bondage commands us to do no murder. The law of liberty, by telling us to “love our neighbour as ourselves,” even while it makes us the judges of our own motives, and the measurers of our own deeds, makes it also

impossible for the man who loves himself to hate his neighbour.

The law of liberty, while it treats us creatures endowed by God with reasoning faculties, and not "as horse and mule, which have no understanding, whose mouths must be held by bit and bridle," has in reality added to our duties, not diminished from them; for to everything that we had before, it has added responsibility. He who is commanded not to murder, and not to steal, and not to bear false witness, and not to covet, has simply to abstain from murder, and to keep his hands from picking and stealing, and his tongue from evil speaking, lying, and slandering. But when that same man is told to do to others as he would they should do to him, then he has to weigh his own duties, to set himself his own tasks, and to measure by his own measure his own performance of them. Of course by stealing he determines his own restitution, and by murder his own punishment; but the system of liberty and self-legislation goes far beyond this. If a man covets his neighbour's house and lands, I do not see how he can escape without giving him his own house and lands. If he exacts all his neighbour's time in attendance upon him and his selfishness, he must, by his own rule,

devote all his own time to the service of his neighbour.

This is the law of liberty. We are not tied down by God to particular rules, but we are called upon to be our own lawgivers, and to tie ourselves down. All motives are taken away except one, which is to influence and regulate everything. The Lord does not say as Moses said, "Whoso doeth this, shall surely die;" that shall be "visited to the third and fourth generation." What the Lord says is simply, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." He who does that will take a pleasure in doing all that God takes a pleasure in, just as a child would take a pleasure in the act of pleasing its parent. "Dutiful" might have been the word to express this if we had not the word "affectionate, which implies dutiful and something more. The dutiful please God, the affectionate take a pleasure in pleasing Him.

Do you observe the force of the expression in the Gospel for the day, the second is *like* unto it. Why like? Why is loving our neighbour *like* loving God? Does it not mean that it is the same moving power that is influencing us still? God loves our neighbour, God would wish our neighbour's welfare, temporal and spiritual, and we love God;

we would please Him, therefore, by doing that which gives Him pleasure. How can we, then, hate him whom God loves, and do harm to him whom God would prosper?

“On these two commandments,” says our Saviour, adapting His words to our comprehension, and dividing the idea, that we may see the two forms of it, “on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” But there is only one commandment, Love God; for there is another sense in which the Christian may take that saying of St. John, “Whoso loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him; for of His own will begat He us.” We are His children by adoption and grace; and if we love the Father, and have no means of showing our love to Him by reason of the immeasurable distance by which we are removed from Him, we have at least the power of showing our love to Him by loving His children, and serving Him by serving them. “Beloved,” says St. John, commenting on this very subject, “we are *now* the sons of God; we had not this particular reason before, but we have it now.”

Our Lord recurs to this sentence at a very solemn period of His ministry; it is when He is taking leave of His disciples pre-

paratory to giving them the greatest proof of love which it was possible to afford: "A *new* commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you; that ye also love one another."

Now hear St. John's comment upon this. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself so to walk even as He walked. Brethren, I write *no new* commandment unto you, but an *old* commandment, which ye had from the beginning. Again, a *new* commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you."

It is not a new commandment that we love one another, but a very old commandment, with a new and additional motive for keeping it, a new debt of gratitude which we cannot repay, or hope to pay directly, and, at the same time, a new means opened to us whereby we are graciously permitted to repay it indirectly.

And now the only thing that remains is to explain why it is, in any sense, a new commandment—why, if the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world, the commandment, as we have it now, was not given from the foundation of the world. If we are living under a law of liberty now, and are permitted to set ourselves our own tasks of love,

and to fix our own means of showing our gratitude, why was it not so always? why were kings and prophets, who desired to see the things which we see, denied the blessing of seeing them? or, in other words, why are we more fit to live under a law of liberty than God's Church under the Mosaic dispensation?

I cannot tell you why it pleased the Lord to send the Holy Ghost upon us, and not upon them. I cannot tell why it pleased His inscrutable Wisdom that Christ should die, and obtain for His people gifts from Heaven at the particular time in which He did die, and not a hundred or a thousand years before; but grant that, and the rest is easy. It is because we are fitted for the law of liberty, and they were not. It is because consciences enlightened by the Holy Ghost are, so to speak, self-directing; and consciences not so enlightened are not self-directing; or rather, to speak more accurately, because God, not having made their bodies His temple and His dwelling-place, governed them from without; but having made us His temple and His dwelling-place, governs us from within. The commandments are the same; the God who gave them is the same; it is the Residence of that God that is chang-

ed. He did work *on* us, He does work *in* us, "both to will and to do of His good pleasure;" and therefore it is that, though the commandments are in reality *old*, older than Moses, as old as the fall of man, which made them necessary at all, to us they are *new*; that is, the light in which we see them is new. We could not be trusted to our own guidance then. We can be trusted now; for, by the Holy Ghost that is in us, we have now GRACE to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the Devil; we have GRACE to enable us to follow with pure hearts and minds the only God; and this we have through Jesus Christ our Lord.

H.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE TURNING-POINT OF OUR LIVES.

Eph. iv. 17.

“I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk.”

THE lesson of this Sunday is seen in its Collect—that without God we are not able to please Him, but that God the Holy Ghost does, under certain conditions, direct and rule the hearts of men. It is evident, therefore, that if we are under these conditions we *are* able to please God, and that to say we are not able to please Him when He has held out conditions in which we *may* please Him, is mere faithlessness—the very worst description of self-deceit, because it is taking a Gospel truth, and making that very truth the ground for deceiving ourselves.

This, therefore, is the point carried out by the Gospel and Epistle. The Gospel describes

the turning-point of a man's life, the Epistle a man's conduct before and after that point.

In the Gospel, a man afflicted with the palsy is brought before Christ; brought, you observe, by his believing friends, not coming from his own belief, or trust, or hope. The Lord, seeing *their* faith, not the man's faith—we do not know whether he had faith or not—but seeing the faith of the friends, saith to the sick of the palsy, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” Can we not see in this the child incapable of faith himself brought to the Font by the faith of those about him?

You will observe that this forgiveness is to all intents and purposes the same as that of Baptism, it is the washing away of sin. People wonder sometimes when they see how careful the Apostles were to baptise, and how indispensable they evidently considered Baptism with water and in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to the salvation of their converts, and then remember that our Lord Himself never baptised at all, and in many cases forgave sins without visible or water Baptism. If these people remembered that the outward visible sign or form in Baptism is of no value whatever in itself, but derives its whole efficacy from the Word of Christ, which made it what it is, they would cease to

wonder that the Almighty God Himself dispensed with it. Christ could wash away sins in any way that He pleased, but we can wash away sins by that means only which He gave us for doing it. Water is not indispensable for God in His own proper person, but it is indispensable for man, because God gave him no other means.

The man, then, was baptised by God's Baptism, and the difference between his state before and his state after was exactly this, that whereas before he was able to do nothing of himself, afterwards he was able to perform all the ordinary duties of life; his sins were forgiven him, therefore he was able to do those things which, since he had been under the power of the disease, he had been unable to do; and, as soon as he was able, he received a command from Him to go and exercise the power he had thereby acquired—"take up thy bed, and go into thine house."

In histories such as this, which are recorded for the express purpose of revealing doctrine, we must be particular in noticing a number of little things which in other records would seem matters of course. No speech of our Lord's is a matter of course; He might have said, and it was most natural that He should have said, Arise, and follow Me, or Arise, and

show these people that you are healed. What He did say is, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thy house." We serve God by doing the common duties and offices of life with the Spiritual strength which He has given us to do them with.

All our Sunday lessons are derived from a portion of the Gospels and the Epistles taken conjointly, because the Epistles are specimens of the way in which the Apostles set the Lord's doctrine before the people. In very few instances indeed did Jesus Himself teach the people; in most cases His teaching was directed towards His disciples alone. He would be on earth for a short time, He therefore occupied Himself mainly in preparing those who would supply His place. Hence we find, "Jesus Himself baptised not, but His disciples;" "Jesus gave thanks, and brake" the five barley loaves and two fishes, and gave them, not to the multitude, but "to the disciples, to set before the multitude;" and afterwards He tells them to make disciples of this multitude, and of other multitudes, "teaching *them* whatsoever I have commanded *you*."

The Epistles, therefore, show us the way in which those Apostles received this typical teaching of their Lord, and the way in which they explained it. We are very apt to think

that the Gospels are easier to understand than the Epistles. It is not so. It is easier to understand the facts, it is easier to understand that Christ did heal, and that Christ did perform this or that miracle; but the inner meaning and doctrine of these facts we should not understand at all, nor even see that there was an inner meaning in them, unless the Apostles had set it before us. The Gospels are easy to us only because the Church, having the Epistles and the general teaching of the Apostles, is able to lay them before us plainly.

The Epistle for this day, therefore, is a comment upon this text. St. Paul addresses the Ephesians, and beseeches them that *henceforth*, that is to say, from the time they have passed this turning-point of their lives, they should not walk as other Gentiles walk, in the emptiness of their minds, for that is the true meaning of the word which we render "vanity." In them it might be excusable, because their minds were empty, which, of course, means empty of grace; because their understandings had not been enlightened, in the only way in which they could be enlightened, by union with God. They could not therefore feel the incongruity of all this, and therefore they naturally enough would "give themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all

uncleanness with greediness." This for *them* might be natural enough, but for *you*, who have passed the turning-point of "forgiveness of sins," it would not be natural—no more natural than that the man now no longer sick of the palsy should continue lying on his bed, and trusting to the efforts of others. "You have not so learned Christ;" you have not studied your Gospel to so little purpose as that, if, at least, you have been taught the real meaning of His teaching "the truth that is in Jesus." Your "old man," your former nature, it is very true, was corrupt, was just like that which you see on every side of you among the unbaptised Gentiles; but this, you must remember, you have put off; you have now put on a new nature, and that nature is "created after God," or similar to God.

The force of this passage is derived from the Book of Genesis, in which we are told that God created man after His own image. This, as God is a Spirit, must necessarily mean, not an outward or bodily similitude, but a Spiritual likeness; so, that man loved what God loved, and hated what God hated; and that not as we do it now with an effort and a contest against opposing thoughts, and desires, and inclinations, but naturally, and, as it were, instinctively; and so it went on, for

“Adam begat a son in *his own* likeness.” The new creation, the new birth, put into the mind of man new desires ; and this brings us to the Apostle’s expression, “creates us again after God;” we begin to have an instinctive desire after righteousness. Now the whole Christian trial consists in bringing this engrafted aspiration to good effect.

We have the desire and the power given to us ; the Devil, though not destroyed, is bound ; his power is limited to those who are willing to readmit him. Therefore the Apostle enumerates those things which are the Devil’s works, and calls upon those who are redeemed of God to put away these things. The first sentence is remarkable ; we are to put away lying, and to speak every man truth with his neighbour, *because* we are now members one of another—the whole hinges on the fact of our having been adopted into God’s family. Bitterness, wrath, clamour, evil-speaking, and malice, are to be put away. Why ? Because they render ourselves and all around us miserable ? By no means. It is quite true they do produce such effects, but that is not the reason to urge with Christians. The reason with them is, that they have received the Holy Ghost, and have been “sealed by the Holy Ghost unto the

day of our Redemption," and that He Whom we have received for this purpose is of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity," and that these things "grieve Him."

And when we come to virtues, it is the same thing. Heathens—other Gentiles—might say, be kind to others, for others have been kind to you; or, be kind to others, and then others will be kind to you; or, be kind, because it is right and seemly, and virtuous in itself. These are all reasons, and, like the reasons for abstaining from vices, they certainly do apply to Christians, for Christians, like heathens, are men, but these are none of them the Christian's reason. The Christian is kind, and that whether others are kind or not, because he has promised to follow the example of Christ, and Christ was kind; he forgives others, not because they deserve it, they may or they may not, but because God for Christ's sake has forgiven them.

This is the lesson for the Sunday, that the turning-point of God's forgiveness through Christ, which is our case in Baptism, has opened out to the forgiven an entirely new set of motives, and feelings, and grounds of action, as well as new powers for exercising them. The Christian is a new man; not so much because he does new things which he

had not done before, for many of them are things which, if he was a right-minded man before his adoption, he might have done just the same; but that even for these he has new motives. What he has gained besides his forgiveness for the past, is the power to keep on steadily and constantly, and a motive before him which is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The unbaptised man acts from impulse—sometimes right, no doubt, but very generally wrong—for he has neither object, nor pattern, nor power. The Christian has the Pattern Man always before him, the Prize of his high-calling always in view, and a Guide and Comforter always pointing to his Example, and always enabling him to conform himself thereto.

Hence the Collect:—

“Remembering always what our former state was, remembering our total inability in that state to please God, remembering, and thankfully remembering it, because it continually points out to us the blessedness of our present state, in which we have received the Holy Ghost, and are entitled to call for His help, we pray to God that He would in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

H.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE POWER OF GRACE.

Matt. ix. 8.

“But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, who had given such power unto men.”

ON this nineteenth Sunday after Trinity we enter fully into the subject which we just touched upon at the conclusion of the preceding sermon. We have seen that the Commandments of the Old Testament, by being left to our own measurement, acquire a breadth and a comprehensiveness which they did not possess before. We have seen that, in spiritualizing them, the Lord has made the keeping of them much more difficult. We see that to perform outward acts of duty is easy in comparison to the task of acquiring such a disposition as will render such performances natural, and matters of course; in fact, that

the acquiring of such a disposition as will fit us for heaven is altogether beyond our power.

The subject, therefore, which this Sunday opens to us, is the new nature acquired by the act of Regeneration. The Lesson of the preceding Sunday has been discouraging; it has disclosed duties evidently beyond the power of our natural strength. The Lesson of the present Sunday, therefore, is consoling and encouraging, such that, when the multitude see, they may glory God who hath given such power to men.

The Lesson is not the duty of men generally, but the duty of men as baptised Christians—as servants who have received at their Master's hand the talents, and are now setting forward to trade with them, so as to bring back not only that which He had then committed to them, but the increase also. St. Paul, in the Epistle for the day, clearly distinguishes the Ephesians, to whom he is writing, from other men. He tells them that they should not *henceforth* walk as other Gentiles walk. And what does the word *henceforth* mean? Is it not beginning at some definite time? And is not that time evidently the day on which they ceased to be like other Gentiles; that is to say, the day when their sins were forgiven them, the time when the

burthen was taken off their shoulders, when they were furnished with something wherewith to trade in their Lord's service, and started on their Christian course; in other words, the day when they were baptised into the Church and fellowship of the Apostles, and, having received that one Baptism for the remission of sins, were gifted with the Holy Ghost, the capital wherewith to trade unto all good works.

This is not the first time in which the doctrine is laid down; but our attention is drawn to it more particularly now in connexion with the doctrine of the last Sunday. The one is the work, the other is the means whereby the work is to be done. This is carried out in the Gospel and Epistle. At first sight these do not seem to have much to do with each other, but since they are invariably selected for the purpose of bearing out the same doctrine, whenever we do not see the connexion, we may be sure we have not yet mastered the subject.

The Gospel is a simple narrative. It relates how Jesus, on a man being brought to Him sick of the palsy, instead of placing His hand upon him, and healing the disease, said merely, "thy sins be forgiven thee;" and on the people being surprised, and probably dis-

believing, how He condescended to give them an outward visible sign, "That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, then saith He to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed and walk."

Chrysostom and Jerome both notice the fact, that as the soul is better than the body, so the miracle of healing the soul must be greater than that of healing the body. But the latter proceeds: "Forasmuch as the one may be seen by the eyes, but the other is not sensibly perceived, He does the lesser miracle, which is the more evident, to be a proof of the greater miracle, which is imperceptible." "Whether or not," says Jerome, "his sins were forgiven, He alone could know who forgave; but whether he could rise and walk, not only himself, but they that looked on, could judge of; but the power that heals, whether it be soul or body, is the same; and as there is a great difference between saying and doing, the outward sign is given, that the spiritual effect may be proved."

This is true; but there is something more in this passage. It is a type. Let any one remember what a paralytic man is, and imagine some active work set before that man as the only condition or hope of his salvation, and then he will fully understand what St.

Paul means by saying, "to will is present with me, but how to do I find not."

In many passages in Scripture the plain history becomes a type; in this the healing of the paralytic man is a type of regeneration. Imagine such a cure—limbs that have been useless and helpless would at once have acquired power to perform their daily work, the tongue that has hitherto been unable to obey the will can now speak praise to God, and good-will towards men.

The whole miracle, therefore, is but a type of that particular healing which we receive at Baptism, which is not only remission of sin, but power to become the children of God.

We have instances enough of the spiritual effect of this throughout the whole of the Acts of the Apostles. The conduct of the gaoler at Philippi, the conduct of St. Paul himself before and after his Baptism, would be quite sufficient to explain that, even if our Saviour had not spoken of Baptism as one of the conditions of salvation, "he that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved."

We will, therefore, to-day take that doctrinal point as granted, and go on to the Lesson taught in the Epistle, namely, how a man thus wonderfully healed and gifted by God with such (to him) new miraculous powers,

should conduct himself so as to work out his own salvation. The duty taught to-day is thus pointed out in the Catechism. When the catechumen has explained the benefits he has received in Baptism, and the promises he has made, he is asked whether he does not consider himself bound to believe and to do all that was promised for him, he is taught to answer with confidence, YES, VERILY, and by God's help, so I WILL, not admitting the smallest doubt or hesitation as to whether God really has given such power unto men. At the same time he feels also bound heartily to thank Him Who has placed him in this state of salvation, and to notice that this does not mean a state of safety, but a state in which his safety is in his own power; for he is taught to pray that God will give him His grace to enable him to *continue* in it until his life's end.

It is absolutely necessary that we should be made to understand the precise nature of our position as regenerated men. There are two dangers, that we underrate the power of the grace given us, and that we imagine an effect which the Lord Who gave it never intended it to produce. When people have thought of the wonderful power of Christ in thus regenerating a man, that is, making a new man

of him, they have often been tempted to think also, Is it possible that such a man can fail in being saved? can a regenerate person ever come into eternal condemnation? will not the same power who healed once always keep him in a healthy state? And we should not be too severe upon people who think so, because it is, after all, a feeling of reverence towards their blessed Saviour which leads them into this error; their heart is right, but they err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. "The Israelites," says the same St. Paul when writing to their descendants the Hebrews, "were all baptised in the cloud and in the sea, yet with many of them was God not well pleased." And so it is always. The Lord, Who gave to the simple washing with water that great and mysterious power of washing away sin, might, had He so pleased, rendered us incapable of ever yielding again to it. And so, indeed, He might have made Adam and Eve in Paradise, only He did not think fit to do so. He placed them, and He places us, in a state of trial, and it is only after this trial, *i. e.*, after this life, that He will make our nature sinless. Let us remember the situation in which a paralytic man would find himself if his palsy were suddenly cured. We have seen that he would have hands fit

to work for his daily bread, and a tongue fit for the praises of God. But is it quite certain that he would use them for that purpose? Might he not use the hands which God had strengthened to steal or to murder? might he not use the tongue which God has loosed to curse, and to swear, and to lie, and to bear false witness? If his healing from the palsy has given him more power to do good, has it not also given him more power to do harm? The healing is God's gift, but has he not the power to do as he pleases with it? * And will any man say, if he does so misuse it, that the last state of that man is not worse than the first?—that God gave him the strength wherewith he might save himself, but he chose to do the Devil's work with that gift, and so to damn himself.

* This is the type of the healing of the paralytic man. "In this paralytic," says Hilary, "the whole Gentile world is offered for healing; he is, therefore, brought by the ministration of angels; he is called Son, because he is God's work; the sins of his soul, which the Law could not remit, (for faith only justifies,) are here remitted to him; and, lastly, he shows the power of the resurrection unto righteousness by taking up his bed, thus showing that all helplessness shall be no more found in his body." "His rising up," says Raban, "is the drawing off of the soul from carnal lusts; his taking his bed, is the raising the flesh from earthly desires to spiritual pleasures; his going to his house, is going to internal watchfulness of himself against sin."

Even so is the gift of God in Holy Baptism; without it we are dead in trespasses and sins, lying helpless under the curse of our first parents' transgression; with it we are quickened; but to what? That depends on ourselves; only so far is certain, it must be to something infinitely better or infinitely worse; there is no returning to the state in which we were before Baptism; we can never again be dead in trespasses and sins, but alive and active, working out our own salvation, or pressing on in our road to Hell. The evil spirit has been cast out of the man certainly, it can never again return to the habitation from which it was cast out, *unless* it find it swept and garnished, that is, prepared by that man's own self for his reception; but if it does return, then taketh it seven other spirits worse than itself, and they enter into that man's mind and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first, that is to say, his baptised state is worse than his unbaptised state.

This will bring us fully to understand the Epistle. This describes the state of the paralytic man after he has been healed, and may be considered as the warning which might have been given him by the Lord Who healed him, and which is given to those of whom He is the type. The Ephesians, to whom St. Paul

was writing, were among those who had been healed and set free from their spritual paralysis; they had taken up their bed, they had gone to their house, their daily work in God's service, and the means of doing it having been thus placed in their hands, if they neglected it, they did so now not from disability, but from wilfulness.

And now let us apply both Epistle and Gospel to our own case. We have been baptised as well as the Ephesians, we, therefore, cannot walk as other Gentiles walk, in the *emptiness* of their mind, and their *darkened* understanding; we are not alienated from God by *ignorance*. If we give ourselves up to lasciviousness, it is not because we are past feeling, since we, like the Ephesians, have not learnt Christ in this manner; and, therefore, we can no more plead weakness than the man who had been cured of his palsy could plead weakness; we had it once, no doubt, "but ye are washed, but ye are cleansed, but ye are sanctified;" what follows but that "we put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Blessed be God, we Englishmen have no need to say, as the Ephesians had, "according to the former conversation," because we can none of us, or, at least, very few of us indeed, remember the time before we

were made "Members of Christ, children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven." But, like them, we are invited to put on, or make use of, the new Man, which is created after God, or in the Image of God. You know that when Adam was first created he was made in the Image of God; you know that he lost that Image, and that his posterity lost it in him. Now, therefore, Christ, by taking our nature or image upon Himself, has restored us to the likeness of God in Righteousness and true Holiness.

This is the Image into which He has created us anew, or regenerated us; and the Apostle calls upon us to put it on, to show that we have it. He shows us also how we are to do it. Putting away lying we must speak every man truth with his neighbour. If ever we feel anger, as probably we may, for we are but men, even though regenerated, we must drive away that feeling, lest the Devil, anger, entering in, bring with him the seven other spirits worse than himself—revenge, malice, and such like. We must not let the sun go down upon our wrath. If we have ever stolen, not only we must steal no more, but we must let the remembrance of the way in which *we* fall into temptation lead us to remove that same temptation from our neighbours by giving to him

that needeth. No bad words should come out of our mouth, but we should try to instruct and bring on our neighbour.

And why should you, the baptised, the elect of God, the saints, be more particular than other people? why is that which is a sin in others sevenfold a sin in you? Why, plainly for this reason, because your bodies have been made temples of the Holy Ghost, and as that same thing which is a sin at home would be a horrible sin if committed in Church, the House of God, so does that which would be merely a fault in a heathen become a deadly sin in a Christian, because he defiles his body, the temple of the Living God.

“Wherefore,” says the Apostle, “grieve not that Holy Spirit, whereby ye were sealed unto the day of Redemption.” Remember, in the Revelation, how the servants of God were sealed on their foreheads; and remember how *you* were sealed on *your* foreheads with the cross of Christ. And why were ye so sealed? In token that ye were Christ’s faithful soldiers and servants unto your lives’ end. This is why sin is so great an evil in you, THE CALLED. Over and above all other sin, you break your promise to Christ, you grieve the Spirit of God, you defile His Temple. And is there not something about quenching the

Holy Ghost, causing God to remove the gift He has given us?

Others may look at sin as a great evil, yet they do not see its power in its full extent, because, holding that every one who is regenerated will be finally saved, they do not believe that it ever gains the final mastery; but the Churchman, believing that all who are baptised into Christ's Body are thereby made members of Himself, heirs of His kingdom, and partakers of His Spirit, estimates at a far higher rate the deadly power of sin, since it is able to maintain a perpetual and sometimes a fatal conflict against grace once bestowed—a conflict to which the early tempers of his own children bear a painful, yet undoubted witness. To him a far more powerful meaning than others can realise is given to the apostolic descriptions of Christian warfare. To others they may be a stumbling-block, because, following the traditions of men, they believe that a man cannot fall away from the grace once given. The Churchman has learnt, and from his Master's own mouth, that he may be even a branch in Christ, and yet, if fruitless, taken away; he has learnt from St. Paul that he may run the race, yet, unless he so run that, he may not obtain the prize; he has learnt from St. Peter that, though he

is called, nay, chosen, he yet must labour with all diligence to make his calling and election sure; from St. Paul that, unless he keep his body under, and bring it into subjection, he may be a cast-away; and from our Blessed Saviour that he may have trimmed his lamp, and be waiting for his Lord, and yet, having no oil in his lamp, be finally shut out.

There is warning certainly in the Epistle. No Christian can contemplate the high position in which he is placed, without thinking of the awful consequences of a fall, but it is far more an encouragement than a warning. He is called upon to deny his sins out of self-respect. All bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking is to be put away from us with all malice, not because they are injurious, not because they are wrong—they are so, but these motives, such as they are, would weigh with anyone—not because they are wrong, therefore, but because we must receive them, if we receive them at all, into that which has become the temple of the Holy Ghost; because we should thereby grieve the Holy Spirit, whereby we have been sealed unto the day of redemption. We must be kind to one another, we must be tender-hearted, we must forgive one another, not

because this will produce the greatest amount of happiness in this world to ourselves, as well as to our fellow-men—it will, but this is not the Christian reason—you do it on the recollection that this God, for Christ's sake, has done to you.

This is the lesson. It repeats that of the last Sunday; it points out again our duties as Christians plainly, practically, but it gives a motive, an aim, an object, and a reason for this, besides showing us the power we have to perform them.

We know that without God we are not able to please Him, but we know that the Holy Spirit, Whom we have received, will in all things direct and rule our hearts; we will not talk, therefore, of our fallen nature, and our weak nature, and our corrupt nature, but we will boldly stand up as Christ's faithful soldiers and servants; strengthened by His grace, revived with His most precious Body and Blood, we will resist the Devil, and he will fly from us; and when we see the fruits of our victory, we will not be high-minded, but with the multitude in the Gospel for this day, we will marvel and glorify God, Who hath given such power unto men.

PROPER LESSONS FOR THE SUNDAYS
AFTER TRINITY, FROM JEREMIAH
AND EZEKIEL.

HOPE OF RESTORATION.

St. John, xv. 1, 2.

"I am the Vine, My Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

THIS text, applied as it generally is, to every Christian individually, gives us the reason why God's faithful servants meet, as we see they do meet, with what the world calls misfortunes. These, our Lord would lead us to understand, are not always trials; they are very often more like the severe pruning which the vine, beyond all plants that are known and cultivated, is constantly requiring, in order to bring it to perfection. Not only those branches which are hopelessly bad must be removed, but those also in which the Husbandman sees some hopes of fruitfulness He must purge, that they may bear more fruit. But this, which is true of individuals, is no less true of the Churches to which they belong; indeed there are passages in Scripture which

make it even more applicable to this case than to the other. In all probability it was to the Church that our Lord was alluding at the time when He spoke this parable, for He spoke it standing under the sculptured foliage of the vine that decorated Solomon's porch. Now that decoration was placed there in illustration of the 80th Psalm, which Psalm was written as a prophecy or history of the Church of Israel.

But the Church of Israel itself, was only a type of the Church of Christ, and our Lord draws the attention of His disciples to this fact. "I am the true Vine," He says; "I and My Church are the true Antitypes, of which this vine which you see here is the type, and the 80th Psalm the prophecy; that which has been shadowed in the type shall be confirmed in the Antitype. If, in the old times, the Husbandman cut off the ten branches that bore no fruit, and pruned and cleansed the other two, in which there still remained some promise, so it shall be now. He says, My Vine is again brought forth out of that great type of the world, Egypt: "Out of Egypt have I called My Son;" it shall again have many branches, it shall again take root and fill the land, the hills shall again be covered with the shadow of it; it shall again stretch forth its branches unto the sea, and its boughs unto the river; the whole prophecy of the 80th

Psalm shall be fulfilled. But—then comes in the warning of the parable—the principle of God's dispensation is not altered, He may not again break down the hedge thereof, or suffer the wild boar out of the forest to root it up, "but every branch in Christ that beareth not fruit, every Church that will not fulfil its mission, shall be removed; and not only that, but every branch that does bear fruit, every Church that does continue in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, God will purge. He will afflict it, not in anger but in mercy, that it may bring forth more fruit. We know that Christ's Church will continue on earth till His second coming, just as its type, the Church of Israel, was to continue upon earth till the His first coming. This the Lord has revealed; but as for the separate branches of it, the national Churches, we have no promise of continuance for them; the Vine may live, though its branches be cut away. Many of these have been removed already, and many that have not been removed have been purged, and all shall be removed or purged according to the amount of their backslidings.

To keep this continually before our eyes during that part of the year in which our mission as Churchmen is set before us, is the object of the Proper Lessons of the Seasons. We are quite at liberty to apply these lessons

to ourselves as individuals, inasmuch as the Kingdom of Heaven is within us; but we must bear in mind that their primary application was to a nation, a Church; that we, as a nation and a Church, have the Lord's work to do; that if we do it carelessly or imperfectly, He purgeth us; if we do it not, He cuts us off, and casts us from Him.

In the last division of our Proper Lessons, the specimen which was presented to us was that of a branch which had been cut off. The gradual decay of the Ten Tribes had been precisely like that which takes place in a severed branch. At first it seemed to possess vitality; at first it seemed that no injury had taken place, all looked fair and flourishing; there appeared, indeed, some farther evidences of growth, just as we see the process of vegetation going on in a severed branch from the sap which it had received before the severing; but already the drying up had commenced, the common life had been cut off, the schism was irreparable, the result of it was merely a question of time, and when in the end Israel was led into hopeless captivity, it was because the founder of its schism, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, had made it to sin.

And now the Proper Lessons take up the history of Judah, and show us in a type the process of purging a true but unfaithful Church.

Judah had offended even as Israel had offended, but Judah was not as yet cut off, and the principle of vitality was not as yet extinct. The Husbandman, by severe discipline, was to bring it forth, and the prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, give us the details of the operation.

The first two lessons of the series, those of the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity, describe to us the state of wickedness into which Judah had fallen after the dispersion of Israel—a state, to all appearance, quite as hopeless as that of Israel itself. “I said (unto Israel) after she had done these things, Return unto Me, and she returned not; and her treacherous sister, Judah, saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce, yet her treacherous sister, Judah, feared not, but went and played the harlot also.”

Both chapters describe a state of moral degradation, the first in the nation at large, the second in their rulers. “Run ye to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any, that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon, saith the Lord.” But this is only the effect, the symptom as it

were; the disease itself lies deeper, and the Prophet traces these sins to their true source, unfaithfulness in matters of doctrine. "A wonderful and horrible thing," he says, "is committed in the land, the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and God's people love to have it so." The cause of this falling away in both countries, therefore, was the same, they had not kept the vows of their covenant, and when God's Judgments had been sent against them, they "had belied the Lord, and said it is not He." That is to say, they were doing just what we do ourselves, they were ascribing their national calamities to national causes. "Neither shall evil come upon us," they said; "neither shall we see sword nor famine." And when God sent them prophets to point out to them the true causes of His wrath, and the certain consequences of their unfaithfulness, they refused to acknowledge His Word, but said that the "prophets were wind, and that God's Word was not in them."

"Therefore," saith the Lord of Hosts, "because ye speak this word, behold I will make My words in the mouth of My Prophet fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them." This refers to the circumstances related in the thirty-fifth chapter, which we will consider presently; but we must first take the very singular narrative of the

Rechabites, which forms the morning lesson of the fifteenth Sunday.

This is intended not only as a contrast to the conduct of Jehoiachim, which was the proximate cause of the punishments which in his days fell upon Judah, but as a means of fixing our attention on that point which the Prophet so urgently presses upon them, that it was the departure of God's people from the traditions of their fathers, and from the laws and customs of their Church, which had been the source of all their moral offences, as well as of their punishment.

At the date of this transaction, Nebuchadnezzar had already invaded Judah, and had occupied with his armies the open country. The Rechabites, who since the days of Jehu had always been in alliance with the people of Israel, had been driven from their wilderness, and had sought shelter within the walls of Jerusalem. The Prophet is now instructed to tempt them to forsake the traditionary customs of their forefathers; he is directed to bring them into the house of the Lord, and to give them wine to drink; an act in itself immaterial, but acquiring a symbolic value from the fact of its being a tradition. His object was to show that God is not a harsh master, requiring a hard and literal fulfilment of His commands, but that all that

He asked of Israel then, and all that He asks of us now, is the best in our power.

Jonadab, the son of Rechab, had left two traditions to his people; the one that they were to drink no wine, the other that they were not to dwell in houses. Now of these two traditions, one they had evidently disregarded, for at that time they were living in Jerusalem. This is not ascribed to them as a sin, but when they are tempted to break the other, Jaazaniah, their chief, explains the principle upon which his tribe is acting. Their disregard of the first tradition was a necessity, produced by circumstances over which they had no control. "When Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, came up into the land, we said, Come, let us go up unto Jerusalem, for fear of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians, so we dwell at Jerusalem." We consider ourselves justified in dispensing with this tradition, since we can give a good reason for having dispensed with it. But for the drinking of the wine there was no such necessity, therefore the customs of the people were binding still. "We will drink no wine," he said, "for Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither you nor your sons for ever."

This conduct God is pleased to command. He promises as the Lord God of Hosts, and

in the sight of His people Israel, that "Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before him for ever;" and then turning to His own people, He declares, "that because the sons of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, had kept the traditions of their father, as He had commanded them, but this people hath not hearkened unto ME, therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Behold I will bring upon this people all the evil which I have pronounced against them."

This faithful testimony seems to have drawn down upon the Prophet the wrath of both prince and people, for in the Evening Lesson of the same day we hear of him in prison. It is always so; persecution is the testimony that infidelity bears to the truth of God's Word. No man thinks of persecuting those who proclaim that which is false; they take no notice of them, they despise them, and their words are forgotten. That which is true we do not despise; we cannot, we are pricked to the heart by it, and we either obey it by following him who utters it, and thus bear witness willingly to its truth, or we disobey it, but not the less for that are we cut to the heart; the people were pricked at the heart at the preaching of Peter, and they said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" they obeyed, but no less were the elders also cut to the heart by the

words of Peter and John, and they sought to slay them ; no less were the High Priests and Elders cut to the heart by the preaching of Stephen, and they gnashed on him with their teeth, and cast him out of the city and stoned him. Thus they bore unwilling witness to the might of his words. It is always so ; all men must bear witness to the truth, either by loving it, or by hating it ; so they did in the days of Jehoiachin, and so they do in our own.

The next lesson gives us the act for which Judah was finally condemned, and for seventy years alienated from God. Jeremiah, now in prison, was directed to dictate to Baruch, the Scribe, the catalogue of all the offences committed by God's people since those days when Josiah had attempted and partially carried into effect the last reformation. These, together with the judgments which were then impending, were written in the roll of a book, which the Scribe was to read in the ears of the people.

We find that at that time a general fast had been proclaimed ; and though no particular reason is assigned for it, yet, as we know that the armies of Nebuchadnezzar had occupied the open country for upwards of a year, and that a siege was impending ; this, in all probability, was done in hopes of averting the threatened calamity.

Viewing these things, as we do, from a long

distance of time, this fast seems altogether inconsistent with that utter neglect of God and of His ordinances, which we also read of; for the fast certainly was an act of worship, and implied humiliation and prayer to God; but, in truth, these two things are in no way incompatible; they are but what we see every day among ourselves; we are not unwilling to worship God—we think it right that He should be worshipped; we have no more objection to days of fasting and humiliation, when any particular calamity seems to threaten us, than they had; we may remember several of them, and the nation keeps them more or less, and thinks it has propitiated God by so doing. In all probability it was in Judah then, as it is in England now—there was much general respect professed to the Name of God; only that then, as now, men chose to show it in their own way.

On that day God's messenger stood forth and read the words of Jeremiah in the House of the Lord; and that not without effect, for the princes seem to have considered the Prophet's denunciation to be a matter of so great importance, as to induce them to summon a council at the king's house; and at this the book and its writer are closely examined. You will hardly fail to see the very close resemblance between the final warning, given first to the people, and then to the princes of

Judah, and the effect produced, first on the people of Judea by the preaching of the Baptist, and then on the council and great men of Jerusalem, by that of Peter and John. It is always so; it is "of righteousness that the world is reprov'd by the Holy Ghost; it is because men see what is right, and cannot help seeing it; they are swayed by it so as to betray their inward conviction by their outward conduct, in order that by their own mouth they should be condemned; it is by an effort that they throw off the Holy Influence, and against their conviction that they bid the divine Visitant depart from their coasts.

It is decided that the matter be referred to the king, and Jehudi is commissioned to read it before him. "And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four pages, the king cut it with his pen-knife, and cast it in the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire; yet were they not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king nor any of his servants who heard these words."

This was an open and deliberate rejection of God, participated in, as the Prophet takes care to inform us, by the whole people; therefore, for the time, God cast them off, the sentence which had been pronounced was now recorded against them, the book was again written against them, and there were added many like words.

Hitherto we have but little in illustration of the difference pointed out by the text between the cutting off and the purging of the branch. In many respects, indeed, the two operations are precisely similar, as indeed it is in natural pruning; in both cases alike it is the removal of God's countenance; and thus we have seen hitherto but little difference between the sentence passed on the two countries, "back-sliding Israel," and "treacherous Judah." The real difference was this: Judah had made light of God's warning, and had rebelled against grace given. It was a grievous sin, and was heavily punished, but Israel had divided herself from God by deliberately departing from the ordinances of His worship, and from those outward and visible channels by means of which inward grace is communicated; for her, therefore, there was no possibility of recovery; she had divorced herself, and, in the emphatic language of the Prophet, "the Lord had given into her hand a bill of divorce."

Now this had never been done with Judah, and this makes the difference between the two nations. In the next series of lessons, this difference begins to show itself by its practical effects. Both nations have now been deprived of the Light of God's countenance. The Ten Tribes are dispersed, gone, their place knows

them no more; they go out of the history of God's dealings with men; we hear no more of them; they were God's children, but they are disinherited—lost.

But the people of Judah were not disinherited; they were God's rebellious children, God's wicked children, but God's children still. This difference becomes immediately apparent by the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, which, though it applies mainly to Christ's Church, and is to continue in force unto the end of the world, began to reveal itself within a very few years of the Prophet's death. "Their teachers were not removed into a corner any more, their eyes saw their teachers, and their ears still heard a Voice behind them, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."

As long as Israel had been in any way God's people, He had sent them teachers; their prophets were indeed mostly sent from Judah, where His outward forms of worship were still undefiled. Salvation was then, as it is always, from the Jews, from God's True Church. But so soon as their sentence is pronounced, and the bill of divorcement given into their hands, these teachers are removed.

Not so with Judah. Jeremiah, indeed, as well as Isaiah, and most of the minor prophets,

had lived in Judah, and prophesied in Judah, and died in Judah; but Ezekiel and Daniel were children of the captivity, and, being so, showed that the communication between God and man had not been cut off by that act of God; they preached in *Babylon*, they declared God's will to His children *while undergoing their punishment*. And this is the great doctrine which the course of lessons we are now considering is intended to convey; that sin turns God's face from us, and we languish in captivity, but that schism, being on our parts an outward, wilful, and deliberate act of determined rebellion, cuts us off from God, and thereby stops from us the flow of grace, whereby we are enabled to repent and restore ourselves.

This, therefore, is the turning-point of the Jewish annals; from this begins the history of the Restoration. You may not see the difference from reading the prophecies, for it is quite true that the denunciations of Ezekiel are even more vehement, and the severity of God's anger, declared by His mouth, more intense than any which preceded the days of his mission; but you would soon see the difference, if you looked at the cotemporary history; the denunciations of the earlier prophets were *disregarded*, their words were treated with contempt, Jeremiah was imprisoned,

Isaiah suffered martyrdom. Not so Ezekiel and Daniel: their preaching is effective; there is an immediate evidence of it, there is a revival of true religion among the people to whom they are sent; they do turn towards their God.

The most remarkable point of the whole of Ezekiel's prophecy is, the title given by the Prophet to himself. He calls himself the "Son of Man," and that by the direct revelation and command of God, "The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying, SON OF MAN, these men have set up their idols in their hearts." In the course of Ezekiel's prophecy, this expression occurs no less than eighty-six times; it is never used on any other occasion in the whole of the Old Testament in the way of a title; it is always applied by the Prophet to himself, and never to designate any other person whatever. And yet there is nothing very remarkable in the expression itself, that in those days men should have regarded it with any particular attention. It is a title of humility, it might have been adopted by any of God's prophets, or indeed by any other individual, whether God's messenger or not. It acquired no significance at all till five hundred years after the death of him who adopted it as his designation; and then we find the same very peculiar expression again occurring, and we see it used precisely in the same

manner; it is again the title used by the Speaker to designate Himself, and never that by which any other person distinguishes Him.* This is not an accidental or carnal coincidence, such as when the expression occurs in the Psalms as an ordinary form of speech; it is again a definite title; it occurs no less than sixty-three times, and always in the same sense.

There must be some reason for this; there must be some connexion between the prophecies of Ezekiel and the narrative of the Gospels, and something also in common between the only character to which it is applied in the Old Testament, and the only character to which it is applied in the New.

The fact is, that the people of God cast out

* There are two exceptions to this. Both these instances are very remarkable, and the more so because, though one occurs in the Old Testament, and one in the New, the vision is the same in both instances. Daniel says, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the 'Son of Man' came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Five hundred years after that the Heavens were opened, and Stephen, a prisoner, and about to become a martyr for the setting up of that "everlasting Dominion, and that kingdom which shall not pass away," saw, and declared that he saw, the "Son of Man" sitting at the right Hand of God. These are the only two instances in the whole Bible in which the title, "Son of Man" is applied by mortal man to the "Son of God."

from their inheritance, but for a time only, and under God's predeterminate purpose of restoration, became by this the very type and representation of fallen man, and the messenger of the covenant, that messenger whose advent declared the communication or covenant between God and man, still subsisting notwithstanding the captivity, was not sent to them as a stranger, an inhabitant of a more faithful and more favoured region, but had come among them precisely as Moses had declared "THAT PROPHET" should come, raised up from among their brethren; a son of themselves, in their state of captivity and degradation, emphatically a "Son of man," such as man had made himself. That messenger, therefore, was the absolute type of Him who brought glad tidings of great joy to those, who, rebellious as the people of Judah, like the people of Judah, had not been finally and irrecoverably cast off. God's anger had not been turned away from their *sin*; God's anger never is turned away from sin; and His Messenger denounces it more severely than any who had preceded him. And so it is in the antitype; the Old Testament has indeed been called the Book of God's Judgments, and the New the Book of God's Mercies; and it is so, it is true. Still, as in no part of the Old Testament the denunciations are so heavy as they

are in the prophecies of Ezekiel, the Son of Man, the Earnest of God's continued covenant with His degraded people, so nowhere in the whole Bible are the proclamations of God's wrath so unmistakable as they are in the words of Him, Who, amid the glad tidings of great joy which He declared to all people, the peace and salvation which He offered freely to the world, speaks of the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched, and the sinner that hath never forgiveness either in this world or in the next.

Of this Blessed Restoration, the commencement of which was typified by Ezekiel, as its establishment was by Daniel, (neither of whom, be it observed, lived to see in the rebuilding of Jerusalem the fruits of their labours,) we will speak more fully in the next division of our subject. Plainly is it shadowed forth by Ezekiel, whose mission, like that of his great Antitype, was during the darkest, dreariest, and most hopeless days of the captivity. His prediction, given at that particular season of utter despair, is as clear and unmistakeable as that by which our Lord has taken it up and applied it to us, His Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church still militant here upon earth. I shall conclude my sermon with this prediction, which belongs to the seventeenth Sunday after Trinity, because, as it was a hope

and comfort to the faithful then, it is no less a hope and a comfort to the faithful now.

The Prophet had declared "God's four sore Judgments," which, coming on the earth, should cut off man and beast from it, even as His Antitype declares that "except those days were shortened, no flesh should be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened," (and to us, who, conscious of our many and grievous sins, are yet one with Christ, as Christ is with us, and as being in a state of union, are yet capable of drawing from Him grace, and strength, and hopes, and means of amendment, these words are a comfort and a joy no less than they were to the people of the captivity.) "Yet behold," says the Prophet, "therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters, and ye shall see their way and their doings, and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it, and they shall comfort you when ye see their ways and their doings, and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord God."

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE WEDDING GARMENT.

St. Matt. xxii. 13.

“Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

THE prayer of this Sunday is conditional, it pre-supposes readiness and willingness on our parts. The Collect does not lead us to pray for this, though this very readiness is God's gift, and one which the Church often teaches us to pray for; but it supposes that this prayer has been granted, and that a ready and a willing mind is in our power; the prayer now is, that being ready and being willing, may be enabled to carry our desires into execution, and to accomplish that which, however ready or however willing we may be, we have no power of carrying out in the works of life and in our daily duties, except by the

same assistance which gave us the desire to attempt it.

The full meaning of this Sunday's Lesson, therefore, depends, like that of most of our Sundays, on that which has gone before. The lessons of the eighteenth and nineteenth Sundays must be borne in mind, before we can understand the full bearing of it.

In the former of these Sundays, the eyes of the Christian have been opened to the full and spiritual meaning of a doctrine, which in part has been familiar to him, I mean God's ten commandments. And, seeing this for the first time, he may easily be supposed to be dismayed at the greatness of the work. Of the commandments themselves, as he first understood them, he might have been tempted to say, "All these have I kept from my youth up;" but now, that he finds them spiritualized by the Christian motive, love; now, that he sees that he is to do his duty to God, not because he fears punishment for neglecting it, but because he is thankful to God, because he would please God, because he loves God; and that he is to do his duty to men, because loving them and serving them is the only way of loving and serving that God, Whom, through love and thankfulness, it is our duty to please; now that this truth is brought

before his eyes in the very words of his blessed Lord, he begins to see the difficulty of that which hitherto he has imagined so easy. He sees that it will employ every moment of his life, that the watchfulness it requires is constant, that as every day and every hour has its own duty, that which has once been neglected has been neglected for ever.

Now, lest like the young man whose words we have been quoting, he turn away sorrowful and give up as impossible that which he finds to be beyond his strength, we have the doctrine of the nineteenth Sunday, which, by showing forth the case of a paralytic man, unable even to come to Christ of himself, but brought by the faith of his friends, admits at once that this work, and all work in the service of God, is beyond our strength. It is, as if the Church finding her catechumen thus convinced of the greatness of his work, said to him, "Very true; you are quite right; this is beyond your strength; you are like the paralytic man; but now see what Christ has done for you; the paralytic man has had his sins forgiven him, so have you at your baptism, and "that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins," that is, hath power to relieve you even while you remain on earth from the weakness which your sins have

brought upon you, as He said to the paralytic man, "Arise, take up thy bed and go to thy house;" so He says to you, Arise from your state of weakness, carry that which has hitherto carried you, and do your duty in your own house, in that particular state of life in which God has placed you, for *now* you are able to do it.

This is the point to which the teaching of the Church has brought us; now comes the step onwards of the present Sunday. The things which God would have done, His commandments that is, have been pointed out to us; we would cheerfully accomplish them, but the power of doing this is from God.

Is there, then, anything that depends on ourselves? Yes, there is, there is something which has been placed entirely in our own power, something, without which all the grace that God has sent, will be like rain on the sea-sand—there is Readiness and Willingness; we cannot of ourselves help ourselves, but we may be ready and willing to receive help. And this God does require of us. Our Heavenly Father will indeed see us while we are yet a long way off, no doubt; He has said so; but we must *arise* and *go* to our Father first.

This is shown in the parable of this day's Gospel by the Wedding Garment, which is the

main point of it when considered in this light. It refers to a custom, common to this day among Eastern kings, of giving every one whom they invite a dress of honour, which they are to wear during the entertainment. The dress is the king's free gift; the putting it on, or the not putting it on, is in the absolute power of him who receives it, but the refusal to put it on is always regarded as an act of open and intentional insult to him who gave it.

We see, therefore, the system of alternate warning and encouragement in the Church's teaching. She warns us that we are not able to do God's work. Lest we despair, she encourages us by showing that God gives us the power; and, lest we presume, she warns us that a far heavier punishment will fall on him who despises the goodness of God, and neglects His work, than on him who, never having experienced that goodness, is unable to perform it.

You see that the man who presumed to partake of His Lord's feast, not having on a wedding garment, is reduced to the very same state of incapacity that has before been typified by the helplessness of paralysis. He is "bound hand and foot."

Now this gives us a glimpse of that awful

state which it has not pleased God fully to reveal, but which is called in the Christian dispensation sin against the Holy Ghost; or, generally, sin against grace; in which God gives us up and takes away from us the power of Repentance, even while we are in His presence; the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, and the despairing sorrow of Judas, will give you some idea of it; but in this parable it is shown by the words, "bind him hand and foot," prevent him from doing that which he might once have done. You will observe the difference between the two states, both equally helpless; in the first, the man is paralyzed, the natural consequence, indeed, of death having entered into the world by sin, but no immediate act of God; in the latter he is "bound hand and foot" by a direct order from the king; in both states he is equally unable of himself to do anything as of himself, but in the first case it is a natural consequence, in the second, it is a judicial sentence.

The parable of the Gospel is not intended to describe the history of the Last Day, but of the present, of every day. We must not confound this parable with that of the Great Supper related by St. Luke; that is an entirely different revelation. "Here," says Gregory, "by the wedding feast is denoted

the present Church; there, by the Supper, the last and eternal feast, for unto this some enter who shall perish; unto that, whoever has once entered, shall never be put forth." "The marriage feast," he says in another place, "was made by the King, the Father, for the King, the Son, when He joined to Him the Holy Church in the mystery of the Incarnation."

Having shown you the object for which this parable was selected, the way in which it bears on the Collect for the day, and on the general system of the Church's teaching during this season, we will explain briefly its remaining points, which, though in this day's teaching they are merely incidental and subservient to the doctrine of the wedding garment, are in themselves doctrines of no small importance, and show more clearly the type.

The marriage, as we have seen, is the marriage of the Lamb—the union between Christ and His Church, which Church, having existed from the time of Abraham at the very least, probably ever since those days when mankind were distinguished as "the children of God," and "the children of men," was now sanctified by its union, and made holy unto the Lord." "The servants," says Hilary, "who were first sent to call them that are

bidden, are the Apostles; they who, being before bidden, are now invited to come in, are the people of Israel, who had before been bidden, through the Law, to the glories of Eternity. To the Apostles, therefore, it belonged to remind those whom the Prophets had invited. Those sent with the second invitation are the successors to the Apostles. When, therefore, the Lord bade the Apostles go and preach, saying, "the kingdom of Heaven is at hand," He gave them the same message as He gives here: "I have prepared my dinner," he says, "I have done it long since; the feast to which I invite you now has been long ago prepared in the Law and in the Prophets. But all things are now ready; the entrance into the kingdom, which had hitherto been closed, is now open through the Incarnation; the Scriptures themselves are complete; they who are ignorant may gather instruction, the self-willed will meet with terrors, the despairing will find hope, and the sorrowful consolation." This is what we call the Gospel—the Good Tidings; and this message the Apostles delivered in the power of the Holy Ghost.

But some made light of it. In every stage of the Church there will be worldly men who will go to their farm and their merchandize,

forgetting that to "those who seek the kingdom of God first, and His righteousness, all these things will be added," and thus, by preferring temporal things to spiritual, turn even the necessary and reasonable occupations of life into a sin.

But the wedding is ready, even though they that were bidden are not worthy. The whole Sacrament of the human dispensation is completed and closed, and the offer of it, which was rejected by those who were first bidden, is now made to the trades, and callings, and professions, of the whole world. "Go out into the crossings of the streets; call men of every condition." This is our message.

"The marriage feast of Christ and His Church is filled," says Origen, "when they who were found by the Apostles, being resored to God, sat down to the feast. But since both bad and good were called, it behoved that the bad should not continue bad, but that they should put off the garments unmeet for such a wedding, and should put on the marriage garment, to wit, bowels of mercy and kindness. For this cause the king goes out, that he may see the guests sit down before the supper is set before them, that they only may be retained who have put on the

wedding garment, in which he delights; and there he saw one who had not on a wedding garment." "One man only is mentioned," continues Origen, and his words are very remarkable, considering the age in which he lived, "because all who, after faith, continue to serve that wickedness which they had before faith, are but of ONE KIND." There is no such thing as mortal and venial sins. All sin repented is venial, all sin persisted in is mortal. "There is but one wedding garment for each, and this Hilary explains to be the grace of the Holy Spirit and the purity of that heavenly temper which, taken up on the confession of a good inquiry, is to be preserved pure and unspotted for the company of the kingdom of Heaven."

"But when the Lord, entering in," says an ancient father,* "finds one not having this wedding garment, he inquires of him, How, then, were you made a Christian if you neglect these works?" Such a one is now delivered over to the king's officers. "He is chained up," says Origen, "from the power of walking, which he employed not to walk to any good thing, and from the power of reaching forth his hand, wherewith he had fulfilled

* Pseudo Chrysostom.

no good thing." His own depraved desires are permitted to have the mastery over him, and thus, as it were, to become officers in God's service, and instruments of God's punishment. "Those," says Gregory, "shall gnash the teeth who delighted in gluttony; there shall weep those eyes which here roamed in illicit desire; every member shall have its peculiar punishment which here was a slave to its peculiar vice."

This, therefore, is the Lesson the Church would have us lay to heart. God is not an austere Master, reaping where He has not sown, and gathering where He has not strawed. He does not punish us for not doing that which we are unable to do, but for not having the readiness and willingness to do that which He has put in our power. The bonds of wicked and depraved desires," says Augustine, "are the chains which bind him who *deserves* to be cast into outer darkness. He does not wish to be better, then God leaves him to his wishes."

We pray, in the Collect for this Sunday, to be kept from all things that may hurt us; but that means our own evil desires. With them, everything can hurt us; without them, nothing. "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities,

nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." No man ever was hurt, really hurt, in the path of his duty. If, therefore, you would be safe, pray in the Collect for to-day, that you may be ready both in body and soul, and that you may cheerfully accomplish those things which God would have done, knowing *for certain* that you can do them through Jesus Christ our Lord.

H.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.

THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD.

Eph. vi. 13.

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.”

LAST Sunday we said that we have been invited to the marriage of the Lamb, and that we have been called to that marriage from the lanes and the by-ways of the world, and from the crossings of its streets, by the servants of the Most High King, who, acting under the immediate directions of their Master, have gone and made disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We have, therefore, in virtue of that invitation, a right, not indeed, as yet, “to enter in through the gates into the city, for that refers solely to the Church triumphant, and of this we are,

as yet, inheritors only, not possessors, but a right to enter in to the marriage of the Lamb, His union with His Church.

This, then, is our title for *entering*; but that which entitles us to *sit down* there *after* the Advent of Him who has invited us, and to *remain* in the Presence of One who is of Purer Eyes than to behold iniquity, is the wedding garment, a something given us on our admission by the Lord of the feast. It is given, indeed, of His free will, but it is to be put on or rejected by us at our free will.

Thus far we have been taught already. The next step is to see what the wedding garment is, the putting on or the rejecting of which makes all the difference, even to the elect, between the joys of the marriage feast and the outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This is explained more fully by that which St. Paul wrote about it to the Ephesians. This doctrine is the same, though the figure which conveys it be somewhat different. St. Paul, like our Lord, still speaks of it as of that which is not ours, for he calls it "the armour of God," and, exhorting them to put it on, he also speaks of it as something which they might or might not put on, as they thought fit; but he calls it not now a garment, but

armour. That, therefore, which, under the type of the marriage garment, or white robe of honour, has already conveyed to us the idea of purity, holiness, or, in fact, remission of sins, now, under the type of armour, conveys, besides this, the idea of protection, power, strength, ability to contend. And, in fact, the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is typified by these two figures alike, is, both the one and the other; viewed with respect to God, it is the righteousness of Christ, which we have put on by being united to Him, and this alone enables us to stand in the sight of God. Viewed with respect to this world, in which we are placed to fight the Lord's battles, it is the power to contend, and the means of defence. In this view, it is the strength of Christ, that power, whatever it was, in which He, as man, resisted the temptations in the wilderness, and which will alone enable us to stand against the wiles of the devil in the wilderness of this world.

But a mere portion of this, as much as we feel inclined to put on, as much, or rather as little, as we think will just do for our present needs, will not suffice us. The Christian life must be a life of progressive holiness. If it be not, that which we have is not real; for if it is real, God will infallibly increase it. For

this reason it is that we are to put on the *whole* armour of God.

To illustrate this, to show us how the Lord leads us on from strength to strength if only we will follow His guiding, we have, in the Gospel of the day, an example of imperfect faith gradually confirmed, or, if we take up the figure which we have been speaking of, the whole armour of God, put on piece by piece.

The Gospel relates the healing of the nobleman's son at Capernaum. Now this very word nobleman is imperfectly translated, or rather the translation is incapable of conveying to our minds the full image. The expression is "a certain *kingly man*," which, as Theophylact explains it, typifies man deriving his soul from the King of the universe, or, as we should call it, a man formed in the image of God. And as Adam had lost this image of God, and had begotten sons in his own image, this must mean a Christian, who, since the Lord has taken this nature upon Himself, may be said to have regained the image which Adam had lost, and to be again "a kingly man." "His son, that which is produced by his natural affections, his mind, in short, labours under a fever of evil passions; he goes to Jesus, he entreats Him to come down to exercise the condescension of his pity, and

to pardon his sins, before it be too late." Our Lord answers, "Go thy way. Advance in holiness, and then thy son shall live; but if thou stop short in thy course, thou wilt destroy the power of understanding and doing right."

The history of this miracle is not at all the less real because it is capable of this mystical interpretation. A nobleman, a man bearing the Roman Emperor's authority, and deriving his consequence from this, did, in real fact, entreat the Lord for his son; and the Lord did, in real fact, heal him. There is no reason that we should doubt one word of this; but He did it in the particular manner recorded by St. John, in order that the miracle performed might be a type for our instruction, as well as a blessing to him who asked it.

The man ennobled by the king's authority typifies, as we have seen, the Christian sanctified by bearing his Redeemer's image. This nobleman has a certain amount of faith, for he comes to Christ to ask that which God alone could give; but it is not complete faith, it is not full confidence as yet, for, unlike the Centurion who says, "speak the word only," he imagines it necessary that the Lord should exhibit His *visible* presence.

We may see that is his idea, for the Lord, who reads his heart, says, "Except ye *see* signs and wonders, ye will not believe." But forasmuch as a certain amount of faith is shown by His coming at all, the Lord is pleased to increase it. "Go thy way," He says, "thy son liveth." And the man believed. "Still," as St. Chrysostom observes, "he could not have believed wholly and completely, because he asked of his servants at what hour he began to amend; he wished, therefore, to find out whether the recovery was accidental or according to Christ's word."

The miracle was obvious. "Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him," not in the ordinary way, but all at once, evidently the Lord's special act, and not the result of nature. "So the father knew that it was at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth, and himself believed and his whole house."

The reflection which Bede makes upon this will show us how appositely this particular miracle has been selected for this part of the Church's teaching; because it explains to us a portion of the doctrine which neither the Lord's type of the marriage garment, nor St. Paul's type of the armour of God conveys fully to our minds, and that is the growth of

grace, the fact that grace, well used, attracts more grace—that the Lord Himself helps the unbelief of those that believe. Bede says, “Faith, like other virtues, is formed gradually, and has its beginning, growth, and maturity. This nobleman’s faith had its beginning when he asked for his son’s recovery, its growth when he believed the Lord’s words, its maturity after the announcement of the servant.”

This is the Lesson of the Gospel, and this will enable us fully to comprehend the object of St. Paul when he says, “Put on the *whole* armour of God.”

It is the same sort of lesson that we are taught by those Scriptures which tell us, that he who breaks the least of God’s commandments, is guilty of all. However excellent each portion of our armour may be, however strong the shield of our faith; however firm the helmet of our hope; however keen the sword of our Scriptural knowledge; however sound the breast-plate of our righteousness; it is the whole of this which forms our armour, and we do not fight in safety until we have clothed ourselves with the whole of it. Till this is the case, strong and well defended as we may be generally, still there will be weak points here and there in our souls, through which the enemy may reach us, and this will

render unavailing all our other defences, excellent as they may be. The Apostle urges the number, the strength, and the subtilty of our adversaries, that as we wrestle, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, we cannot afford to neglect any precaution, or any defence; and that, if we would be strong in the Lord, or in the power of His might, so as to stand against the wiles of the Devil, we must put on the *whole* armour of God, and our faith must be full, complete, explicit, not like that of the nobleman when he came with "half a heart," as the Prophet calls it, to ask Christ to save his son; but like that same nobleman after he has had full proof of the Almighty power and goodness.

We have seen that the whole armour of God, and the marriage-garment, alike typify the power of the Holy Ghost within us, called also putting on Christ, or putting on the image of Christ; but that the former signifies this, as qualifying us to stand before God, the latter, as enabling us to stand against the world and the Devil.

Now, the latter is the leading idea of the day; we are described as soldiers, whose duty

it is to fight against Christ's enemies, and these enemies not Beings of flesh and blood, but principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places. As these are greater than man, it is as evident that we cannot resist them in our own strength, as it is that we cannot stand before the Lord in our own righteousness. As, therefore, before we were warned to put on the marriage-garment which the Lord had given us, so now we are exhorted to put on the whole armour of God. For our encouragement the Epistle has shown us, that this armour may, by God's grace, be put on gradually, that is to say, our faith and God's grace may be strengthened, and that though the whole is necessary to salvation, we need not doubt but that the Lord will enable us to put on the whole.

We now come to see what that whole armour is, and this St. Paul explains by a type which occurs very often in his Epistles. Writing to a military nation, and adapting his figures to those to whom he is writing, he very frequently describes the obligations, graces, and privileges of the Christian character, by allusions to the oath, the dress, and the discipline of the Roman soldiers.

Hence the well-known expression in our

own baptismal service, "Christ's soldiers and servants;" hence St. Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians in this Epistle, to prepare themselves for this holy warfare, by putting on the whole armour of God; and, that they should understand fully the manner in which the gift of the Holy Ghost, typified by this expression, adapts itself to all the changes and chances of a warfare so arduous, he likens the variety of defence to the different portions of the soldier's armour. "To the helmet of the first," says Heber, "he likens that exalted hope of salvation, which is to the latter a defence and a crown. The impenetrable breast-plate of the soldier, corresponds with the righteousness and good conscience of the saint; the iron-studded sandal of the one, with that Gospel of peace which prevents the foot of the other from sliding; and the shield, which it was death to forsake, and the sword, which was in closer fight the Roman's only weapon, with that faith from which even fiery darts fall blunted and powerless; and with that knowledge of God's word, the edge of which no sophistry is able to withstand.

This, and nothing less than this, is the whole armour of God, that which alone can enable us to withstand in the evil day; but this is not all that St. Paul says, even this is

not sufficient; we shall not stand even in God's armour unless *we* have done all. His words are, "having done all, to stand," for the sword of the Spirit would be useless, unless we drew it, and the shield of faith would be worse than useless, if it lay idly by our side.

In our collect, therefore, we repeat our prayer for pardon and peace, which we made last Sunday, we ask again for the remission of sins, which is the marriage-garment of last Sunday; but to-day we add to this a prayer for the sense of present safety, which is conveyed by the idea of strong armour, and for that desire for active service which the gift of it seems to require at our hands, we pray to *serve* God, and to serve Him with a *quiet mind*, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

H.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Philippians, i. 11.

“ Being filled with the fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ.”

ON this Sunday, as on the last, the precept or lesson for the day is given in the Epistle, and is illustrated or explained by an example in the Gospel. The precept is, that we Christians, having been forgiven and endowed with special grace, and *because* we have been forgiven and endowed with special grace, ought to be better men in our lives and conduct than those who have not been so privileged.

You will readily see the connexion of this with the lesson of the preceding Sunday; that gift of Christ which will qualify us to stand in the presence of the Lord in the next world, and which does enable us to do His work in this, the marriage-garment, or the

armour, call it which we will, implies, evidently, something to be done by us as Christians, which we should not be called upon to do if we were not Christians. The lesson of this Sunday exemplifies this practically, giving us an instance of the sort of alteration which ought to take place in our outward conduct, resulting from the sense that our own sins have been forgiven.

The Epistle for the day, taken by itself, is not very clear on this point; it requires explanation; but you will have no difficulty in understanding the full meaning of it, when we have compared it with those other passages of Scripture, with which the Church has this day coupled.

In writing to his Church at Philippi, St. Paul prays, that "their love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment; that they may approve the things that be excellent; that they be sincere and without offence, till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

In this prayer there is indeed something to be taken notice of; such as St. Paul desiring for them, that their love to God might be accompanied with knowledge and judgment, for it is very possible to have a real zeal to-

wards God, which if it be coupled with ignorance and thoughtlessness, may lead us as far from the right path, as it did St. Paul himself in his earlier life, when it urged him, by way of doing God service, to persecute His Church. This is easy to be understood, and does not now require much explanation. That which follows is not so easy, and does require the explanation it meets with in the Gospel; it speaks of being filled with the fruits of righteousness.

Now the fruits of anything means whatever that thing produces as it were naturally and of course; we say the fruits of sin is death; the fruits of repentance is amendment. We should have no great difficulty in understanding the Scripture, were it to say that the fruits of God's grace is righteousness; but what does it mean when it speaks of the fruits of *righteousness*? We should suppose that righteousness itself was the fruit, not the tree that produced it.

Now, first of all, let us observe that whenever the word righteousness occurs in this sense, it always means the same as justification. If righteousness is to mean virtue, in that sense we have no righteousness of our own to boast of, and this is implied by the words "through Jesus Christ," the righteous-

ness which we have is only through Jesus Christ.

What we mean by the fruits or effects, *i.e.* by being justified, we shall best understand by taking it in this light. Man was in a state of nature, that is to say, inheriting a natural weakness from Adam's corruption; but man, at least Christian man, has been removed from this, and placed in a state of grace, which means, in a state of strength derived from his having been made a member of Christ. This state is sometimes called a state of justification, and is here called a state of righteousness *through Jesus Christ*. When, therefore, the fruits of righteousness are spoken of, it means the fruits or consequences of being in a regenerate state, instead of being in a natural state.

Now, what should be those consequences? The Gospel gives you a sample of them, and by this you are to judge what is the natural fruit of grace in other situations. The one which the Gospel selects is the forgiveness of injuries.

Peter said unto Jesus, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him, until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven."

If you go back a few verses you will find that our Lord had been giving His Apostles directions for the treatment of offenders in the Church, that if thy brother trespass against thee, thou shalt first tell him his fault in private, then before witnesses, and, if that will not suffice to bring him to a proper sense of his error, tell it to the Church, and if he neglect to hear the Church, the offender is to be then as a heathen, that is to say, he is to be cast out of the membership of Christ's body; for, he adds just afterwards, whatever ye bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatever ye loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.

Now, all this is not difficult for *us* to understand, we can see at once that our Saviour is speaking to His Apostles in their public character, as bishops bearing God's commission, and speaking with God's authority, not their own; but this which is easy for us to understand, was not so easy to the Apostles at that time, when there was no Church to govern: so St. Peter naturally enough thinks that all that our Saviour has been saying refers to him in his private character, as a man, not as a Bishop; he says, therefore, How often is my brother to sin against me before I put this sentence into execution, and by binding him

on earth, shall cause him to be bound in Heaven, until seven times? Our Lord tells him now what he has to do as a private Christian. As for offences committed against *thee*, I say not until seven times, but until seventy times seven; to that there is to be no limit. The man in the other case was rejected, not for his offence, but because he would not hear the Church, by the Apostles as Bishops, but this is a case for the Apostles and all of us as men.

You will observe here, that St. Peter's question shows faith, but without knowledge or judgment, which is the great characteristic of St. Peter throughout his whole life. There must have been faith, for he makes no question about whether he had the power, that our Lord had promised him, and he takes it for granted; this is faith; but at the same time, he makes a very serious mistake as to the nature of the power he is endued with. Of the very same nature is the mistake of the two brothers, who asked if they should call down fire from Heaven to consume a village that had slighted them; it showed faith, confidence of their strength through Christ, but ignorance as to what manner of Spirit they were of.

Now this is precisely the subject which the

Church takes up to-day; it explains to us what ought to be the fruits of righteousness, that is to say, the consequences of our being in a state of justification; how we ought to act as individuals, as baptized men—what difference baptism ought to make in us.

Observe the parable, and how the true state of the case is explained to St. Peter.

Therefore is the Kingdom of Heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants, and when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. But, forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant, therefore, fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all; the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

The Kingdom of Heaven represents, as it always does, the Church, and, therefore, the Lord taking account of His servants must represent, not so much God's mode of dealing with all men, as His mode of dealing with those who have promised to be His soldiers and servants unto their lives' end, and yet have fallen from the grace given them at bap-

tism. It is, therefore, fitly used to explain the doctrine of the day, what ought to be the fruits of righteousness, or the fruits of the Christian state.

The ten thousand talents represents the sins which we have committed against our better knowledge, the times in which we have done despite to the Spirit of grace. It is an enormous sum, yet who will say that it is too great, when he thinks of his own past life, when he thinks of his youth, and how that was spent; disobedience to parents, disobedience to superiors, perverseness, selfishness, contempt of God's Holy Name, His day, and His Word, vanity, falsehood; when he thinks again of his manhood, and reflects how much of it that ought to have been employed to the glory of God has been given to the pursuit of gain, or ambition, or selfish gratification. Or even, supposing that through the grace given him in his baptism, neither youth nor manhood have been wasted in forgetting God, or disobeying Him; supposing that he still holds fast that he hath, and has let no one take his crown, can a man remember, "There is not a word in my tongue, nor a thought in my heart, but Thou, O God, knowest it altogether?" Can a man think of this, and say the sum is too great to represent his sins

against grace? He may, indeed, refuse to look at it, he may close his eyes against it, but this does not diminish the weight of what he owes, any more than it diminishes the debt of an inconsiderate spendthrift, that he refuses to look into the bills that are sent him. There must be, some time or other, a day of settlement, if no means are taken to pay off the account due; there must be a time when the King will come and take account of his servants, and when he begins to reckon, who shall say for certain, that he is not himself of the number of those who owe Him ten thousand talents.

And, as all are so far alike, that none can say we have no sin, so all are alike in this, too, that they have nothing at all to pay. For what can they do? repent of having sinned? That they may well do; but how is this to do away with that which is past? when we are in debt we shall not pay it off by lamenting that we have ever run in debt. But they will sin no more. That, of course must be their endeavour; but suppose they have kept that promise, does it discharge a debt now existing, that you do not make that debt larger? Will not the debt remain that was first contracted, whether you increase it or not? So that all we can do, we are like

the servant in the parable, we have nothing to pay.

We cannot realise to ourselves the next step in the parable so fully and completely as men could in the early days of the Church, when full-grown men came in faith and trust to the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, and returned cleansed through that blessed sign, not only from original sin, but from the actual sins of their past lives. We cannot realise that feeling now in its fullest extent, for our own baptism took place before we could remember; and the forgiveness which God gives us after Baptism is but conditional. He puts our sin away from Him for Christ's sake, but after baptism, it is only provided we do not ourselves recall it to Him by our future conduct. There is but one baptism for entire remission of sins. Still we may form some idea of it when we, like the servant in the parable, having fallen down and worshipped our merciful Lord, confessed our debts, confessed that we have nothing to pay, can venture to hope that the absolution which His servant pronounced will reach even unto us. When we experience this, we may form some idea of what the servant in the parable felt when His Lord was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

The state I have been describing, that is to say, the state in which we are permitted to receive God's forgiveness, and, consequently, to be considered righteous persons, is what the Epistle means by the word righteousness.

Now what are the fruits of righteousness?

In the Christian state (represented by the word righteousness) you have nothing at all to pay for what is past, and your sin is blotted out. Would it not be shocking for one who pretended to have this hope in him to entertain malice or resentment against a fellow-creature on account of some real or supposed injury? We are taught by the conclusion of the parable in what light such conduct would appear in the eyes of God.

But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants who owed him a hundred pence, and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet and besought him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not, but went, and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt." There is a curious piece of minute accuracy here in the Scripture, which may be as well not to pass over. The servant fell down at his lord's feet and *worshipped* him, saying,

“ Have ^{*}patience with me, and I will pay thee all.” In describing the conduct of his fellow-servant, every word is copied which was used in the former case, except the word worship; that is left out (Chrysostom), the reason why is so evident that I need not point it out; but it gives us a good instance of the number of little lessons, that we may pick up by the way in reading the Scripture.

We will now return to the main object of the parable. Here we may observe two things. First, that the fellow-servant really owed the other *something*; he owed him a hundred pence. This supposes that we may, indeed, receive an injury from our neighbour, may be seriously hurt in our reputation, or our fortune. It is not asserted that these things are nothing, that we can avoid feeling them as injuries, or that we have not a right to complain when men commit them intentionally. Neither is it asserted that a hundred pence is not a sum of money which it may be inconvenient for a creditor to lose. Forgiveness of injuries is a piece of self-denial, and so the parable represents it; the man would thereby lose a hundred pence.

But what the parable does imply in the second place, is this, that the greatest injury which a fellow creature can do us, is no more

in comparison with our offence against God, than a hundred pence to ten thousand talents; or, in our money, three pounds to about four millions; and, therefore, as the fruits of our righteousness, *i.e.*, as the consequences of our having been forgiven, God may well require of us if we hope for forgiveness from Him, that we will forgive our fellow-servant. That He does require it is plain enough from the remainder of the parable.

“So when his fellow-servants saw what was done they were very sorry, and came and told unto their Lord all that was done.” This is put in to explain to Peter that which he did not understand, the office of the Apostles in the Church as to binding and loosing; they are represented as telling their Lord, not their Lord as finding it out.

Then his Lord after that he had called him, that is, after He had called him by death to judgment, said unto him, “O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desirest me, shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee?”

When he had owed him ten thousand talents, the lord did not call him wicked, nor did he at all chide him, but had mercy on him; it is when it is found he does not bring

forth the fruits of righteousness, is not at all better for all that has been done for him, that his lord says for the first time, "O thou wicked servant;" he was angry now, he delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay that which was due unto him. Here, then, is the Lesson of the Sunday; this is the meaning of the Fruits of Righteousness, that we should learn to make the conduct of our Heavenly Father in making us righteous, the example for our conduct towards those with whom we live on this earth. If we do not, we have not profited by our justification, and our Lord, who loved us till now, and pitied us, becomes angry and delivers us to the tormentors.

"So, likewise, shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your heart forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Of course you will not suppose that God forgives us, *because* we forgive others; He forgives us first, and expects that we will see from that the conduct that is pleasing to Him; if we do not follow that example, we do not want to please Him, He forgives us no more.

This is called the Fruits of Righteousness, or the results of our being made members of the righteous Saviour. It is so called because the duty is hard to flesh and blood, and the

Spirit which practises it, can be produced only by the grace of Jesus Christ, which has this excellence, this proof that it came from Him, that it creates the quality which it prescribes.

The belief of what the Scriptures tell us, that we are all sinners before God, that we have all had pardon offered us freely through the mercy of Christ, must if we faithfully believe it, create in us the same feeling of mercy towards others. The Christian is tender-hearted and forgiving, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven him.

This, then, is the secret for creating such a spirit in your hearts. Meditate on your own need of mercy. Think of the ten thousand talents which you owe, and you will forget the hundred pence that may be due to you. One who truly feels the weight of his own sins, will find it impossible to think severely or feel resentfully towards his neighbour. He *must* pardon others, when there is so much to be pardoned in himself; and if he has tasted in his own bosom the peace and comfort of a Redeemer's love, he must forgive when he has had so much forgiven.

PROPER LESSONS FROM EZEKIEL AND DANIEL.

THE RESTORATION OF GOD'S CHURCH.

Ezekiel, xiv. 22, 23.

“ Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters : behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings : and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it. And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings : and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord God.”

IN the last series of Proper Lessons, we have been tracing out the history of God's people in their falling away. We are now to follow it in their restoration.

As a first step to this, we have the Elders of Israel coming to the Prophet, in order to inquire of the Lord, (Ez. xiv.) The Lord

Himself points out to them why it was that hitherto their eyes had been holden, and their understandings darkened, so that they had been deceived by the *Lord's own Word*. This is a chapter which may be read with great profit by those, who, independent of Christ's Church, profess to find out for themselves their own religion and their own form of worship from the Bible. To understand the Lord's answer, we must refer back to the history of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. God declares that He will not be inquired of at all by those who come in such a manner. "Son of man," He says, "these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face—have not yet put away the original cause of all their sin. Should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore, speak unto them, and say unto them, Every man of the *House of Israel* (the covenanted people) that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the Prophet, I, the Lord, will answer him *according to the multitude of his idols*." Their very prophets, those who bore God's commission as the interpreters of His Word, had been deceived, and the sin of Jeroboam was still at

the root of it. God would not be worshipped by those who worshipped in this manner, and if men, beginning to see their danger, were desirous of inquiring of Him, they must first put away that which had separated them from Him.

This is always the first step; nothing can be done towards restoration till the cause of the sin is put away. Repentance, not general repentance only, but repentance in the particular point in which the sin consists, is the first phase of faith; we must renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this sinful world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, before it is possible for us to believe the articles of the faith, still more, to keep God's holy will and commandments. Without grace we are incapable of faith or obedience, and without repentance we are not fit recipients of grace.

But repentance must be individual and particular, each must repent for himself. A man may indeed be permitted to make *intercession* for others, as Daniel afterwards was permitted, but repentance is a personal work, and therefore God declares in the same chapter, "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in the land, they should save neither son nor daughter, they should deliver but

their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God."

This prophetical warning was something more to the Israelites than it is to us; to them, as it does to us, it pointed out an invariable rule, but to them it designated their future reformer, and the successor of Ezekiel to the prophetical office. Noah and Job were historical characters, not so Daniel; he was then a child, for this was uttered before the siege was begun, and here he is pointed out as the successor to Ezekiel in the office of a Judge and Prophet. Brought up, as he was, in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, he was unknown probably to the public for many years after this date, though he was the man destined by his wisdom and incorruptible probity to raise the Jews from their state of degradation, and to prepare them for the favour of Cyrus and Artaxerxes, in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra.

The next lesson gives us more distinctly the terms on which alone remission of sins can be obtained, pointing out the great mistake which Israel had always made in imagining that God's Providence for good or for evil extended over them as a nation only, overlooking their individual sins. "He," says God, "who hath walked in My statutes, and hath kept My judgments to deal truly, he is just,

he shall surely live, saith the Lord God;" on the other hand, he who hath done all the abominations which the Prophet enumerates, "he shall surely die, his blood shall be upon him." God's people collectively had been cast off, and were then suffering the punishment for their national sinfulness; of this fact the elders must have been convinced when they came to inquire of the Lord; they find out now that they are to be restored individually, and that the nation would be reformed by the reformation of the individuals that composed it.

Even in these times the idea of God's special Providence is little understood—even in these times there are many sincere Christians, who, on days appointed for national humiliation, humble themselves in sincere piety, perfectly convinced that the affliction on account of which they are humbling themselves is a messenger of God, that it is sent as an act of His special Providence as a chastisement for natural sin, who are quite satisfied that the temporal prosperity and adversity of nations is in the hand of God, that as a nation theirs is a sinful nation, and deserving of God's chastisement, without seeing how they themselves can be personally instrumental in averting them; forgetting that national sinfulness is after all only an aggregate of individual sins,

and that he who would reform a nation must begin by taking away his own individual sins from the heap.

This is what the Prophet points out in the eighteenth chapter of his prophecy, for this was the great stumbling-block of the whole nation of the Jews; this is what St. John alludes to when he says to each individual Israelite, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

This it is that Ezekiel is now pressing upon them as the first step to their restoration; sentence is gone forth, he would say, as a nation you must undergo it, but as individuals you must restore the nation by returning, not in a body, that will not be permitted, for your government will now be in the hands of others, but as individuals. "Behold," saith God, "all the souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine. The soul that sinneth it shall die." That is, each one shall bear his own responsibility. This idea is carried out into great detail in the Lesson, as it must have been a doctrine peculiarly difficult for the Israelites to realise; the practical inference being, that as each is responsible

for his own part in the national sin, so each may do his own part in the restoration; and that part is, "When the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness he has committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." They are drawn one by one as brands from the burning, until the whole fire is extinguished. "Understand, therefore," says the Lord God Himself, at the conclusion of this lesson, and as a sort of summary of it, "I will judge you, O House of Israel, *every one* according to his own ways." This is a very peculiar expression if we notice the opposition of the noun of multitude, "O House of Israel," and the individuality of the word "*every one*." It means very much more than that God would judge His people according to their ways, it contains the principle of God's Providence in His dealings with all nations that belong to His Church. It is this; "the way in which I will judge you as a nation, is by judging every one of you in particular," "therefore, repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions." This is addressed to each one of them in particular; and so iniquity shall not be *your* ruin, that is, the ruin of the nation in the aggregate.

This same doctrine is carried out one step further on the next Sunday in the twenty-

fourth chapter. The object of this chapter is to show that the greatest privileges, whether national or individual, are no sort of preservation from God's wrath, and from absolute destruction, if those privileges are neglected. The Prophet's similitude here, is a pot, probably one of the sacrificial vessels which we read of in the First Book of Samuel. It is filled with the choicest pieces, such as are specially dedicated to God; but it is placed on the fire and left to itself. Evidently, under such circumstances the scum would accumulate, and the water would waste itself exactly in the same manner whether the pot was filled with the choicest pieces, or with the most ordinary food; in either case, man's own constant attention is necessary if he would preserve it. The very choicest pieces mixed with the scum would in the end become a burnt, uneatable mass, and then, when that within is exhausted, the vessel which contains it, the very outside framework of society, will dissolve. It has nothing to preserve it. The water is dried up, the pot is now empty on the fire, so that the brass of it becomes hot and burns, and "the filthiness of it is molten into it, *that* the scum of it may be consumed." You will observe the word "*that*," the outer framework of society, that which constitutes a nation is

permitted to be destroyed *in order that* the scum may be consumed. If the defilement be not removed by the care of man, it *must* be removed by the hand of God, though the framework of society be dissolved in removing it.

In this chapter, which is the last lesson taken from Ezekiel, we have the same sentence expressed by a symbol. Ezekiel himself becomes a sign unto them. It is the same idea throughout. The Lord admits that they are His people, that they are very near and dear to Him, that they are the desire of His eyes—but, He says, “Son of man, behold, I take away the desire of thine eyes by a stroke;” and this the Prophet is commanded to repeat to the people. He did so. “Thus I spake in the morning,” he said, “and in the evening my wife died.”

On that very day Nebuchadnezzar commenced the siege of Jerusalem, and the nation which had been hitherto the desire of the Lord's eyes, was to him even as the Prophet's wife. “Speak unto the House of Israel, said God, Behold, I will profane My sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, and that which your soul pitieth, your sons and your daughters which ye have left, shall fall by the sword.”

This is the declaration of the sentence, and

from that time till the accomplishment of it, the Prophet's mouth is sealed. It was a time of absolute alienation from God, His grace had departed, and from henceforth His oracles are silent, He will be no more consulted.

But the very last words which the Prophet had uttered, contained a sentence of renewal. The Lord, at the time when He closed His Prophet's mouth, promised him, "He that escapeth in that day (the day on which the sentence is executed,) shall cause thee to hear it with thine ears. In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him that is escaped, and thou shalt be no more dumb, and *thou shalt be a sign unto them, and they shall know that I am the Lord.*"

This is the last sentence from Ezekiel which we read as a Sunday Lesson. The process of restoration is carried out by the succeeding prophet, for it seems to be the almost invariable rule of God's dealings with us, that "one laboureth, and another entereth into his labours." So far, however, had been accorded to Ezekiel, that he should himself see the restoration of the spirit of prophecy in his own person. He tells us, therefore, the performance of this gracious promise, and this you will understand is far more than the mere restoring the power of speech to a man for some time

struck dumb. It is not at all certain that Ezekiel was ever deprived of the power of speech; he was divested of his *office*, it is in his prophetic speech that he is dumb. The restoration of it was therefore the re-establishment of the communication between God and His people. It was their very means of repentance, the very hope of their ultimate restoration from their captivity, giving them, as it did, the grace and the power to profit by past warnings, and an earnest of future help, grace, and direction from God in the still continued succession of his Prophets.

"It came to pass," says Ezekiel, "in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, and the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem, came unto me saying, The city is smitten. Now the hand of the Lord was upon me the evening afore he that escaped came, and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning, and my mouth was opened; and I was no more dumb."

If the Proper Lessons of the Church had been chosen on any other principle than that of serial instruction, we should in all probability have had other selections from the Book of Daniel than those which form the morning and evening Lessons for the Nine-

teenth Sunday after Trinity; for though to this Prophet have been accorded visions of the coming Saviour, and His kingdom upon earth, more definite and more explicit than to any other in the whole Bible, the only two chapters which are presented to us from him are purely narrative, and contain no prophecy nor doctrine whatever.

We must, however, consider them, as we must many others in the series, not as detached lessons, nor according to their value as vehicles of prophecy or doctrine, but according to the place they hold in the Church's teaching, and the lesson which they complete.

Now the last prophet had given us the true theory of restoration for a Church, which not as yet out of covenant with God, nor utterly cast off by Him, had fallen away from grace given, but was seeking return.

The fallen Church, disorganized now, and no longer a polity, may, we see, by God's grace be restored; but if so it cannot now be by public and common acts, acts of government and legislation, of which it is no longer capable in its state of captivity; but by that of which it is still capable, individual penitence and individual righteousness.

Now of this, the two chapters from the Book of Daniel are remarkable instances; for

we trace in them the manner in which the Jews, prisoners of war, slaves, in fact, and utterly despised by their conquerors, had gradually made themselves first respected, then trusted, then preferred to high offices, so as to take part in the very government which was holding them in captivity; till at last the reigning monarch, not from the love of God, nor from any commands he had received from Him, but from mere political motives, because he considered that people who had raised themselves from a state of slavery to have become valuable allies, restored to them the land of their inheritance, and became the unconscious instrument of God's Providence. Cyrus lived a heathen and died a heathen, but through the righteousness and fidelity of his captives he became the Shepherd of the Lord; while on the other hand, though it was beyond a doubt that it was the Lord, and the Lord only, that restored His people to their inheritance, yet it was by means of their own faithfulness and their own holy firmness that He did it; showing that if "Shame is a reproach to any people," it is "Righteousness that exalteth a nation."

In the last prophecy which Ezekiel had delivered before his mouth had been temporarily sealed, he had, under God's especial

direction, laid down the principle of all true repentance, that it is resignation under God's chastisement, combined with a lively sorrow, not for the loss or the suffering, but for the cause of it. This he showed under a figure. When he had himself been deprived of the desire of his eyes by a stroke, when his wife died, he had been told "neither to mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down, forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead." And when he tells the people that Ezekiel shall be a sign unto them, he adds, by God's command, "Ye shall do as I have done, ye shall neither mourn nor weep," that is, ye shall make no useless lamentation for what you have lost, but you shall mourn for that which caused your loss, "*ye shall pine away for your iniquities*, and mourn one towards another."

They did so. Ezekiel was a sign to them, and in our next Sunday Lessons, those from the Book of Daniel, we have the fruits of their repentance.

In order to understand better the bearing of these chapters on the general teaching, we must always keep in mind what the sin of the Jews really was, and not confuse the moral offences of which both Israel and Judah had been guilty, which were but the symptoms of

the disease, with the disease itself, the corruption of that form of worship which God had delivered to His people by His Prophet Moses, the type of Christ, the Lawgiver.

This had been over and over again declared by God's Prophets, but hitherto their words had fallen to the ground. Now, however, when their predictions had been actually accomplished, it became evident that the Lord had spoken by them, and their words now began to take effect on the hearts of the people, because the very fact of their warnings having come to pass, was an earnest that those parts of their prophecy which pointed out the means of restoration would come to pass also.

The next step in the restoration, therefore, was their utter renunciation of those particular sins which they saw had brought down their punishment, and this, we know from history, was not only sincere but general, throughout the whole nation. Whatever sins are afterwards recorded against them, they were always zealous for the worship of God and for His ordinances, even to suffering persecution and martyrdom on account of them. Under no circumstances of trial, even to the end of their history as a nation, did they ever fall into those particular transgressions which

had delivered Israel to the Assyrian, and Judah to the Babylonian.

But as the mind fixes more readily on special biographical instances than on general history, the Church selects a few of the most remarkable, which are presented to us as instances of the general feeling of the nation, and examples for our individual imitation.

Among the captives carried into Babylon were four children, who had been selected by Nebuchadnezzar for their personal beauty as well as their abilities; these he purposed to bring up in the palace, and to instruct in the language and learning of the Chaldeans, for the purpose of presiding over his new subjects, whose language was strange to their captors. They are described as "children in whom there was no blemish, who were well-favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had the ability to stand in the king's palace, to whom they might teach the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans." (Daniel, chap. i.) Their Hebrew names were Daniel, Ananias, Misael, and Azarias; but to all of them were given Chaldaic appellations, by which the latter three are now best known. These four were brought up in the king's palace, and were to eat at the king's table.

To understand what follows, we must remember that it was the invariable custom of all heathen nations to dedicate the food which they ate to their gods by what was called a libation. This was the difficulty felt by the early Christians about the "meats offered to idols," about which St. Paul was called upon to decide.

It makes this passage the more remarkable that Daniel and St. Paul come to different decisions on this particular subject. Seeing the Jews zealous for the worship of God, St. Paul leaves this matter, unimportant in itself, to be determined according to each man's conscience, because idolatry was then no longer a temptation. It was not so in the time of Daniel. Idolatry had been the crying sin of the nation, and he who repents, must cut off every occasion of falling back. Accordingly, from the first, the four young men steadily refused "to defile themselves with the king's meat," and preferred living on pulse. This piece of consistent self-denial, seems to have commanded the respect of the king, and to have conciliated his favour, for we still find that the four children "stood before him," and at the end of the chapter we are told that Daniel continued to do so until the first year of King Cyrus; at which

time the Prophet must have been between eighty and ninety years of age.

This, the first step to restoration, having been accomplished, the two Sunday Lessons are introduced, to show us how God makes use of the self-denial, firmness, and consistency of individuals in His general work of restoration. He lets their light shine before men, men see their good works, and thus they come to glorify their Father who is in Heaven.

Occasions for this will never be wanting. Nebuchadnezzar, probably as a matter of state policy, and in order to ascertain who were and who were not well affected to him, or possibly with the view to magnify himself and his power in the eyes of his subjects, set up a golden image, generally supposed to be an image of himself, which he commanded all people to worship. This was evidently contrary to the laws of God, a temptation to fall into the very sin from which Israel had been recovering; and Shadrach, Meshech, and Abed-nego, hitherto the king's faithful counsellors and obedient subjects, calmly, steadily, and with a full knowledge of the danger they were incurring, refused to do the king's bidding. It is an example, when taken in conjunction with the preceding chapters, of rendering unto

Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. The story is well known, and we need not go into it now, but you will observe that the result of it is another step towards the restoration of the people; it is what we should call an act of toleration for the worship of the Lord, and the immediate promotion of the confessors themselves to situations of influence in the province of Babylon.

This lesson gives a single act in the lives of the three children, but it should not be taken detached from the first chapter of the Book, because the effect which we see resulting from it could never have been produced by the acts of that one day, had they not been consistent with the conduct of their whole lives. But for that, their refusal to worship the Golden Image would have been simply an act of capricious rebellion, and would have been considered as such by God. Neither would their deliverance, supposing it had pleased God to deliver them, have had any effect whatever on the king, or on the people. It was the consistency of their lives, their sense of duty, their absolute obedience in all matters not militating against their duty to God, which rendered their very act of rebellion a proof of their trustworthiness. We see this inciden-

tally in a subsequent chapter, from the testimony of their enemies. "Then, said these men, we shall not find *any* occasion against this Daniel, *except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.*" This was evidently the character which these Jews had acquired, and it was this character which advanced them in the kingdom, and ultimately brought about the restoration.

We may readily suppose, though it is not actually recorded, that with such examples, and under the influence of such men, not the condition only of the captive people, but the tone of their morals also must have rapidly improved. God is pleased, therefore, to advance them yet farther; but this step is also to be purchased by an act of self-devotion.

In the next lesson we find the great Assyrian empire overthrown, and Darius, the Mede, reigning over Babylon and its dependencies. The Jews, favoured and advanced under the late dynasty, have now lost their protector. We may easily imagine the intrigues of politics, and the struggle for power consequent on such a revolution; we can conceive, therefore, that "when it pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty princes, and over these three presidents, giving Daniel, the Jew, the precedence over them all,

this arrangement must have given rise to innumerable jealousies. We have now the history of a court intrigue, the result of which proves the unshaken fidelity of Daniel, as the act of Nebuchadnezzar had proved before that of his companions. The result is the same. God again overrules the purpose of the adversaries; and their machinations, successful as they are, become again only the means of showing forth God's glory, establishing more firmly His worship, and confirming His servant Daniel in such a position in the government, that he was able successfully to raise the condition of his people still farther. Like his predecessor, Ezekiel, he did not live to see the fruit of his labours, for he died early in the reign of Cyrus; but we are told that "this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus, the Persian:" and he must have heard, and, probably, as chief minister, must himself have drawn up the proclamation made "in the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia, that the word of the Lord, by the mouth of Jeremiah, might be fulfilled" . . . saying, "Thus saith Cyrus, King of Persia, The Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He hath charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there

among you of all His people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the House of the Lord God of Israel (He is the God), which is in Jerusalem." (Ezra, chap. i.)

The condition to which the Church of Israel had been reduced in the days of Ezekiel and Daniel, cannot but remind us of the state of the Church of England at this present time. The idolatry into which it had fallen at the time of the Reformation might differ in extent, but in kind was precisely the same as that into which Judah had fallen at the time of the Babylonish captivity; it was the mixing up with the revealed worship of God the unauthorized inventions of man. Like the Church of Judah, therefore, it was not, indeed, alienated for ever and cast off, but deprived to a certain extent, and placed under restraint.

This was its punishment, and this punishment it is still undergoing; and through it, under God's grace is working out its restoration.

The lessons, therefore, which we draw from this part of the Jewish Chronicles, are more particularly valuable to ourselves as a national Church, and more particularly applicable to our own times.

When we speak of the Church under restraint, we do not say it in a disloyal, discontented, or repining spirit; we are convinced that the state in which we are, is the state in which for the present it is safest and best that we should be; we believe that this state is of God's own ordering; we believe that He has so ordered it, as a chastisement, it may be, but certainly as a means of preservation; we are contented with "that state of life into which God has called us," but this state most indisputably is not a state of freedom. God's Church is under the domination of a government, which, if it is Christian, certainly is not a government of Churchmen. As a Church, therefore, we are responsible for our public acts only so far as our free agency has been left us; and it is evident that, deprived as we are of our synods, we are no more able to restore ourselves, than were the Jews in the days of Ezekiel and Daniel.

It is not, therefore, for us to look back upon those times, when by her own synods the Church asserted her own doctrines, distributed her own revenues, ruled her own discipline, determined the conditions of Church membership, and cast out her unworthy members. God has not cast us off; we have the same assurance that He has not cast us off that

He accorded to the Israelites in opening the mouth of Ezekiel; our teachers are not removed, our ears still hear the "voice, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." The succession is unbroken, the creeds uncorrupt, and the sacraments valid; we are still citizens of the Heavenly Jerusalem, but citizens who, for their own demerits, have been deprived for the time of certain earthly rights of citizenship.

Our duty, therefore, is that which was so conspicuous in the examples of Daniel and his companions. Absolute fidelity to the State which contains us and protects us, ready submission in all things which do not infringe upon our duty to God, combined with a steady, unswerving course of principle, not taken up on great occasions and for great occasions only, but pervading our whole lives, in private as well as in public, in the matter of the pulse at the king's table, as well as in the matter of the image on the plain of Dura; a principle showing itself in a quiet, loyal refusal whenever we are individually called upon to do that which is inconsistent with the laws of Christ's Church.

This can seldom be effected by us as a body, as a Church, as a polity, for our earthly rights of citizenship are, in a great measure, suspended; but it may be individually, each

for himself, each as if there were not another Churchman in all England; even as Daniel and his companions acted, as if there had not been another Israelite in Babylon. It is thus that we must make ourselves, as Churchmen, respected by those who certainly have the power, and possibly may have the will, to oppress us; and this in God's good time will lead to the restoration of a Church which He has not cast off, as certainly and as evidently as the supplications which "the men assembled" found Daniel making to his God, led eventually to the proclamation of Cyrus the Persian.

Still the restoration of the Church must not be our object, as it was not that of Daniel; our object, and our only object, is to serve God with all the means which He has been pleased to leave in our power. If, indeed, we are faithful over these things, few though they be, we know that He will make us rulers over many things; still we are faithful, not in order that we may be rulers, but in order that we may serve and please the God of our hopes. And this we shall do by doing His work in His way, not by striving after those things by which we think we could do it better, and of which He in His wisdom has thought fit to deprive us, but by using to our utmost those

which He has still left in our hands. All repining, all impatient struggle to recover lost power, is precisely what would have been the conduct of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, had they organized a rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar in defence of their rights of conscience, instead of submitting themselves to the king's ordinances, and abiding the result.

It is not without a meaning, that in the Old Testament God's Church was preserved for four hundred years in *Egypt*, nor that in the Christian Dispensation it is said, "out of *Egypt* I have called My Son;" it is always so; hard and imperious as it may be, it is the World that, by God's Providence, is the nurse and protector of His Church in the days of its weakness. The time shall indeed come, when "Egypt shall no more be the confidence of the House of Israel;" (Ezek. xxix. 16.) but that time is in God's hand, not ours. "Our strength is to sit still," (Isaiah, xxx. 7.) till He has been pleased to raise up Cyrus, "His shepherd," and to "say to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and ye waste places, ye shall be inhabited," for "thus saith the High and Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." (Isaiah, xxx. 15.)

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

OUR CONVERSATION IN HEAVEN.

Philippians, iii. 20.

“ Our conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“ WE look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” He who is in the midst of us now, but unseen, shall one day show Himself openly to us. “ The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven,” He who now sits at the right hand of the Father, and there displays His glory and majesty, rejoicing the angels with the Light of His countenance, shall at last in like manner fill all His faithful servants on earth with gladness by His appearance. For the present there is a veil between us and our Blessed Lord : by faith we see Him amongst us, but we cannot see Him with the eye of the body. As surely as His Own Word is true, He is alway with us, even unto the end of the world ; He is present with

His Church, and with every faithful member of it; He is present in every act of His Church, and of the ministers whom He has appointed. At every baptism Christ is there: though outwardly Jesus baptises not, but His disciples, yet in reality it is He who cleanses the soul by the washing of water with the word; it is He who then joins, and knits, and takes us into Himself; it is He who makes us partakers of His own Divine Nature, that He may change us from sin to holiness. At every confirmation Christ is amongst us; and as the hands of the Bishop are laid upon our heads to bless us in the Saviour's Name, the Saviour Himself spreads over us those Hands which were once pierced on the Cross for us, that we may receive fresh strength from Him to do God's will. At every gathering together for public prayer in Church, Christ is amongst us, and our hymns and chants of praise, our cries for pardon and help are heard on high, because they are presented by one who is "worthy to be heard." At every celebration of the Holy Communion Christ is amongst us, to plead for us and with us that great and precious Sacrifice of Himself upon the cross, which taketh away the sins of the world. The earthly priest who stands and ministers

at the altar, is a representative, not of an absent, but of a present God. The earthly priest is but the mouth-piece by which the whole fellowship of Christians, the Body of Christ, gives utterance to that faith by which it casts itself for forgiveness and grace upon the great atonement made by its Divine Head. Rather, to state the truth more awfully, the priest is the mouth-piece by which on earth Christ Himself lays before His Father that prevailing offering of Himself which is the Source of all pardon and grace, and in virtue of which He presents His Church, to serve the Father as His accepted and beloved children. And as Christ is present at the Holy Communion as our only Priest and continual Sacrifice, so is He also present to feed with His Own Body and Blood the souls of all who come to Him faithfully.

Thus, even now, even in this life of trial, our Lord is with us at every moment. His eye is perpetually upon us. He watches every weakness, every sin and failing which afflicts us. He sees every earnest struggle we make against temptation. He hears every groan, every cry for help. He catches every sigh of sorrow we breathe. He meets us as we reach after Him, dwells with us and in us, works in us to make us purer,

teaches us first to loathe the pollution of sin, then cleanses us from it; stirs us to long to be holy, then satisfies us with the gift of holiness. He is with us as our Guide, our Strength, our Mediator, and Intercessor, the Food and Refreshment of our souls.

All this our Lord is to us now, but He desires to be even more to us: He desires to be our exceeding great Reward, to bring us to be where He is, that we may behold His Glory. "In His Presence is the fulness of joy." There, where Christ is, every longing of the soul shall be satisfied, every prayer more than answered, every wish for happiness more than granted. And for this we wait. The services of this time of year invite us to cast our eyes onward. They remind us that, great as our present blessings are, there are greater things still in store for us.

Advent is drawing on, that sacred season which teaches us to look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. The last coming of Christ begins now to dawn upon us. We are invited to lift up our heads as those who know that their "redemption draweth nigh." For the present, our life is a mixture of joy and sorrow, of rest and labour, of peace and strife. But this state of things is not to go on for ever. This fallen world is passing away, passing on

to its restoration. One day all its sorrows will be over, as clouds are driven away before the wind, or darkness before the rising sun. One day all its change, and uncertainty, and disappointment will be at an end. "The times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto us, Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things."

We look for the Saviour to perfect the great work of His redeeming love; to wipe away all tears from all eyes, to comfort those that mourn, to banish sickness and suffering and decay and death, to purge out the last stains of guilt, to subdue to the law of God all the rebellions of our corrupt nature, to stablish our hearts unblameable in holiness before God and the Father. His last Advent will accomplish this for us; and, meanwhile, if we would not lose all the gifts of glory which He will then bestow, we are to remember that "our conversation is in heaven." We are to live like those who belong to heaven, for this is what St. Paul means. When he says your "conversation is in heaven," it is the same as saying, your state is that of citizens of heaven; you do not belong to this imperfect and fallen world; your home is in the glorious Kingdom

of God, the blessings which belong to that are pledged and promised to you: your life and ways should be such as are fit for one who is a subject of such a high and holy Kingdom. Therefore, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample;" so the Apostle writes. Join steadfastly and earnestly with that faithful band who are following Christ, and those who speak for Him; "for many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ;" it is with bitter sorrow that I tell you that many live like those who have thrown off all obedience and love for Christ and His Kingdom; nay! they even fight against and oppose the spread of that Kingdom. Instead of worshipping Christ as their Lord, and devoting all their strength and energy to His service, "their god is their belly," to pamper and indulge their bodies with eating, and drinking, and luxury, is their chief thought and care. Instead of understanding that the true glory of their nature is to be made by His grace ever more and more like Christ, to be lifted higher and higher above their mere animal passions, and by the strength of the nature of God working within them, to grow more holy, pure, and spiritual,

they "glory" in "their shame;" they make their boast of that very wild and unrestrained following of their evil lusts and desires, which lowers and degrades them into the state of beasts. Instead of raising their souls and affections above this world, and setting them where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, they "mind earthly things:" they are taken up with this world, and with what it has to give. The great thing that they set before them, is to get as much of the riches, and comforts, and pleasures of this world as they can. Their plans and schemes are laid out for this. They live, and toil, and long, and seek after this as the one thing worth having, the one thing that will satisfy their hearts and and make them happy. And, therefore, the Apostle calls them "the enemies of the Cross of Christ." All such sensual, worldly, self-indulgent, slothful persons, he says, have plainly set themselves against our blessed Lord. There are "many" of them, even among Christians; not merely among the heathen, who know not God, nor the love of God, but even among those who profess to believe in Christ, there are "many" who "walk" in these ways. I "tell you" this "weeping;" I am cut to the heart to see it; to see these men forgetting that Lord to

Whom they belong; forgetting all His love in dying for them; forgetting all the precious gifts He has bestowed upon them, and making no use of them; forgetting the still greater blessings that He holds out to them. But so it is; they have turned their backs upon Him. They are the enemies of His Cross. He was lifted up upon the Cross, that He might draw all men to Him, draw them from sin and rebellion in penitence back to God; and these men are giving themselves over to sin. He was crucified, that we might with Him be crucified to the world, and turn from its snares and temptations to follow Him; and these men have bound themselves afresh to serve the world. He was crucified, that they who are His might crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts; and these men wantonly indulge those foul lusts, which they ought to have striven against, though the strife had been painful as death itself. When Christ gave Himself to die for them, He bound them to love Him, to offer themselves to be His servants, to cleave and hold fast to Him, to be witnesses of His compassion and tender love, of His purity and holiness, of His majesty and power in the midst of a world that was rebelling against Him. And now they have broken every tie by which their Lord

would have held them to Himself; they have deserted Him to go over and range themselves on the side of those who are doing their utmost to bring to nothing the work of Christ's redeeming love. Oh! "brethren," writes St. Paul, do not fall in with this band of rebels, "for our conversation is in heaven:" we belong to heaven, not to the world, and therefore the world's ungodly ways are not such as we can walk in; the happiness and glorious state of heaven is what we should be preparing for, and it is but throwing away our time to hunt after such things as will perish with this perishing world; the King of heaven is our King, and the rule of our life must be not to please ourselves, but to please Him.

So far the words of the Epistle are a solemn warning against a worldly spirit. We are to take care that this world does not so fill our hearts as to shut out from them the remembrance of that better and purer world for which we should be preparing. We are to be on our guard lest the rules, and maxims, and habits of those who make this world their all, become the guides of our life, and so seduce us from the service of Christ. But we want some further direction still, for we have to live in this world. For the present, at least, it is our appointed place. God has set us

here, and given us our duties in this world: we cannot, and ought not to try and escape from them. We must be more or less mixed up with that present course of things which is called this world; we have work to do, absolutely necessary work, which seems to be altogether earthly. We have to provide for ourselves and our families, and we are commanded to do this by God Himself. By the very ordinance of God there must be labour and toil in the earning of our bread, giving and taking of wages, buying and selling, exchanging and bargaining; and much care and forethought must of course be spent on these matters. Moreover, we stand in such relation to each other, that the time of many of us must be much occupied in the bringing up of children, and teaching them such things as appear only to be fitting them for taking their place in this world: or, again, in making laws for the government of the country, or arranging disputes and mistakes about the possession of property. As parents or children, masters or servants, governors or governed, manufacturers or mechanics, a very large portion of our days, and a great deal of anxiety, is bestowed upon what concerns this world.

Suppose, then, that a Christian, who feels that he is a citizen of heaven, and a subject of

Christ, and that his life should therefore be a heavenly one, and his heart devoted entirely to his Lord and Saviour, suppose that such a person is anxious to know how far it is right or safe for him to engage in worldly pursuits, to look after worldly gains, or to take his part in the amusements and recreations of society, how shall we answer him, or give him any guidance? He may take his lesson from the Gospel of to-day. We read there that the Pharisees and the Herodians asked our Blessed Lord whether it was "lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not?" By this question they meant to "entangle Him in His talk;" and they thought that they had so framed it, that whatever answer He gave, they would be able to find matter of accusation against Him. If He said that it was not right to give tribute unto Cæsar, then they might accuse Him to the Roman Governor of resisting the authority of Cæsar: if He said that it was right to pay the tribute, this would be the same as saying that the Romans were the proper governors of the Jews, and so our Lord would give up His Own claim to be the great King, Saviour, and Deliverer of their nation. Thus they pretended that they were troubled by a point of conscience, and wanted to have their doubts relieved. "What are we to do? are we to

obey Cæsar, or are we to obey God?" Observe how our Lord answers them. He "perceived their wickedness." His eye could read their hearts, and see plainly that this pretended desire to find out what was right, was only a deceit. So He said, "'Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? show Me the tribute money.'" And they brought unto Him a penny. And He saith unto them, "'Whose is this image and superscription?'" Whose likeness and name is this which the coin bears upon it? "They say unto Him, 'Cæsar's.'" See, then, our Lord means, the very money which you use shows that you acknowledge Cæsar to be your prince, and your duty is simple and plain enough. Treat him as your prince, pay him the taxes that are due to him. "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's—and unto '*God the things that are God's.*'" Your fit and proper duties to your earthly governor, need never for a moment interfere with your duties to God. Keep well and plainly before your minds that you owe worship, obedience, love, and service to God above, and before every one else: be sure that you do not rob Him of what is due to Him: never let your obedience to your earthly ruler lead you into a sin against the King of Heaven and earth. Make this your

fixed and certain rule; and you need not be afraid that you will be doing wrong in showing all proper submission to the governor under whom you are placed by the Will of God.

Now let us apply this same principle to the case of one who wishes to know how far he may give himself up to the occupations and pleasures of the world without being false to God. Let us say to him: "Render" to the world the things that are the world's, "and to God the things that are God's." Many things you owe to the world, to those that live with you, and around you, to the fulfilment of your duty in the position which God has given you. Those things you must pay. Attention to your business, care of your household and family, kindness and courtesy to your equals, submission, respect, and cheerful obedience to those set over you, all such service as may be required of you for the good of your country; these are debts which you are bound to pay. We may go further, and say that you ought also to encourage all such friendly intercourse with your neighbours, all such meetings for recreation and amusement as tend to keep up feelings of kindness and brotherhood between men. Such things are often high duties. No doubt there are

some to whom it may be more soothing to lead a retired life of study, or to enjoy the calm quiet of home. In some respects it is certainly more safe to do so, though this kind of retirement has its great and special dangers and temptations. But be it ever so safe, or ever so pleasant, we were not sent into this world to live for ourselves, to do that which seems to be most for our own peace, to consult only for our own salvation. No; we are to do good to others also. Therefore it is a false, and low, and unworthy following of our Master, Who went about doing good, (even though it brought suffering, and reproach, and disappointment upon Him,) to hold aloof from the world, and refuse to take our part in that round of offices which God has given us to perform. Render to the world the things that are the world's. You will very likely find some advisers who will tell you to have nothing to do with the amusements and business of the world, to keep aloof from them altogether; and this seems the simplest way of escaping the difficulties that beset us in society; it has, moreover, an appearance of greater devotion to God, just as the Pharisees seemed to be more zealous for God when they said, "have nothing to do with Cæsar, pay him no tribute, it is against the honour of God

to acknowledge him as our master :” but, for all that, it is not right for us to act upon such advice, at any rate, not for the greater part of us, whatever special calls some of us may have. It was the will of our Lord, Whose choice was that of the greatest love and the truest wisdom, not to remove us from those trials and difficulties that surround us. On the very night before His Death, when He was committing His Church to the Father’s care, His prayer for us was : “ I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”

These very words, however, you will see, show that there is “evil” in the world, that there is in it much to corrupt, and pervert, and destroy our souls. Undoubtedly there is. The Bible is full of warnings against it. And while we are rendering to the world the duties we owe it, how are we to know whether it is having a bad effect on us? Let us take the last part of our Lord’s answer to the Pharisees and Herodians, and it will guide us. “Render unto God the things which are God’s.” If the world leads you to rob God of what belongs to Him, then it is indeed corrupting you, and you must beware of it. Your *heart*, for instance, belongs to God. If the world so fills

your heart that you care more for pleasure, wealth, comfort, luxury, the praise of men, than you do for serving and obeying God, then you are rendering to the world what belongs to God. Your *time* belongs to God. If you allow yourself to be so taken up with business, with family cares, with society, with reading, or working, or loitering and idling, that you forget God and the presence of God, and give up or shorten your prayers, and stay away from Church, and neglect to read and hear God's word, then you are rendering to the world what belongs to God. Your *money* belongs to God. If you toil and strive to grow rich for the sake only of having plenty of money either to hoard up, or to spend upon yourself, instead of using your money to do good to others, and to promote the glory of God, then you are rendering to the world what belongs to God. Your *health and strength* belong to God. If you waste these by late hours, by exciting kinds of dissipation, by excess in eating and drinking, if you do things which lower the tone of your body and mind, making you feverish, nervous, feeble, and unable calmly and quietly to pray, and read, and meditate, and examine yourself, or unprepared to receive the Holy Communion, then again you are rendering to the world what belongs

to God. Your *learning, your powers of conversation, your accomplishments*, belong to God. If you make these minister to vanity, if you use them to get praised, and thought much of by men, instead of using them for the greater happiness of those amongst whom you move, and for the honour of God Who lent you these talents to use in His service, then you are rendering to the world what belongs to God.

In short, brethren, the lessons we learn to-day are these: to live in this world as those who belong to a higher and more glorious one; to live on earth as if earth were heaven; to behave as those who know that through the Incarnation and atoning Passion of Christ, heaven and earth are one, and that the baptised members of Christ's Church are one great and holy family together with those pure spirits of just men made perfect who have passed to their rest and with the angels; to speak, and think, and act, as those who know that they are the subjects of the King of Heaven, Whose Eye is ever on them, and Whose work they may be doing every moment. This is to have our conversation in Heaven. And to live this life, we find that we need not do strange or uncommon things; we need not go out from our brethren, nor separate ourselves from

the doings and employments of the world. No; the secret of a heavenly life on earth is to do the common every-day works of ordinary men, but to do them in an uncommon spirit, to do them in a spirit of intense and continual devotion to God: whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God. Parents are to teach their children that they may be fitted to do what God shall call them to. Masters are to rule their households as if they were looking after souls put into their charge by God. Servants are to do their work heartily, not with eye service, as men pleasers, but as unto the Lord. Men of business, merchants, tradesmen, are to set themselves to gather wealth, that they may have more to spend for God. Kings, and those in authority, are to govern so as to encourage peace, order, and religion. Every power of body or mind, every advantage we possess, our rank and place, our name and station, our influence over others, the charm of winning manners, skill in any art, (be it music, or painting, or any other,) the gift of noble birth, or situations of authority, all these are to be rendered unto God, used earnestly, honestly, sincerely, in making Him more known, loved, and obeyed.

Is this a pure and holy pattern of life to

set before ourselves? Is it one that will need much striving and watching over ourselves lest we should be corrupted in this world of trial in which our lot is cast? It is indeed. But let us remember that this high and holy life is set before us because our conversation is in Heaven. We, on our part, are pledged to be the faithful subjects of the King of Heaven; but He also, on His part, is pledged to save, and defend, and strengthen us. Therefore the Collect invites us to flee to Him as our "Refuge and Strength;" our "*Refuge*" from all dangers and assaults of the world and the Prince of the world; our "Strength" whereby we may faithfully work for Him. He is the "Author of all godliness;" and in a firm trust in His love, we ask Him to "be ready to hear the devout prayers of "His Church," and to "grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually." "Those things which we ask faithfully," as the true, loyal, and devoted servants of the King of Heaven, who desire to spend and be spent in His service—those things which we ask, in order that God in all may be glorified, we have a firm and lively hope that we shall obtain effectually, through Jesus Christ our Lord. We know that "He is able to subdue all things unto Himself," "the unruly wills

and affections of sinful men," "the corruption that is in the world through lust," the folly and blindness that has led away so many from Him. Therefore, through all the difficulties, and troubles, and temptations that beset us, "we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ;" we wait for Him as for One "Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body"—Who shall change our weak souls that they may be for ever strong and steadfast in His love—Who shall change this imperfect world into "a new Heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," casting out from it all that rebels against Him, or seduces from His service, and "putting down all rule, and authority, and power," that all things may be subject to the One King of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

ABSOLUTION.

St. Matthew, ix. 25, 26.

"But when the people were put forth, He went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land."

You wish, my brethren, to devote yourselves to God; touched by His wondrous love to you, you would love Him in turn. As you know that He made you, made every limb and part of your body, made every power and faculty of your soul, so you would "render to God" all that is His, you would give yourselves up to serve Him to the utmost. As you know that God the Son gave Himself up to die on the Cross in His intense love for you, so you long to live unto Him who died to save you. He offered up His sacred Body to be tortured and racked in those fearful agonies which He bore when He was nailed to the tree of shame; He offered up His pure

and spotless soul to be darkened by those unknown sufferings which were laid on Him in His Passion ; and all this to make you His own, to set you free from guilt, from the power of sin and Satan, to redeem you, body and soul. And you are ready to offer yourselves to work and to suffer for His Name's sake. You feel that you ought to live in this world as those who belong to Him. You have learnt that your conversation is in heaven, that its courts are your proper home, that its blessed and holy inhabitants are your companions, that its laws are the rule of your lives, that its King is your Lord. Henceforth, all you do is to be done for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Your time, your strength, your talents, your money, are to be spent in doing Him honour. You are to mix in society that men may learn to love Him, and because He has given you duties to perform there ; you are to be diligent in your business or occupation, because He has allotted it to you. Whatsoever you do in word or deed, you are to do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Such was the lesson which the Church brought before you last Sunday, and you wish to act upon it. If you do indeed wish this, then two things will probably—almost certainly—have struck you ; *one*, how very little your con-

versation has been in heaven in time past, how false you have often been to your Heavenly King ; *the other*, how much you are likely to fail in that entire devotion of your hearts and lives to God which you confess to be your duty. For there is no doubt that it is far from easy to give ourselves wholly to God ; to live always as if we felt His Eye upon us, to speak as if His Ear caught all our words, to behave as if He were One in every company in which we move, to remember Him in all hours of light conversation, in times of excitement and honourable rivalry, such as the best men may be exposed to, to feel that He stands over us in the midst of the crowd of pleasure-hunters, that He is a witness of every bargain we make, that He watches every scheme we plan, that He is by our side in the lonely walk, and in the silent chamber, all this is very hard. And so it is very hard to train ourselves to serve Him with hand and tongue, with head and heart, to do our common business, and join in our common amusements, and yet not only not forget God, but strive to please Him. This world is full of snares to draw away our affections from Him. A thousand matters are always ready to take up the place in our souls which He ought to fill. Can we hope

to escape all these temptations? And if not, what is to become of us? We shall be lost to God, cut off from Him, and shall die in sin.

Such are the dangers that are round about us, dangers both real and true, such as we shall do well to think of deeply, for they threaten us with everlasting destruction. Some of us perhaps at this very moment are dead to God, dead to all love for Him, and faith in Him, dead to all zeal and activity in His service. Others of us may feel that the bad influences of the world are so stifling and choking the energy of love and faith within them, that they know not how soon the Spirit may be altogether quenched, and God's grace have perished in them. Are there then any means for restoring a soul that has been thus almost, or altogether cut off from God? There are : and one of these means of restoration is brought before us in the services of this Sunday, namely, that Absolution and Remission of sins which God has given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to such of His people as are penitent.

Look at the history of the raising of Jairus's daughter. Hers was not the more common case of one who was suffering from

sickness. Every sickness, and every disease among the people our Lord had healed. But here was one who might perhaps have been thought to be beyond the reach of His compassion and might, ready as they were for all who called upon Him. Sickness had so far done its work upon her, that she was at the point of death when her father left her, as St. Mark tells us. St. Matthew, describing rather what the father expected, than his actual words, says that she was "even now dead." Yet her father prays for her. When he saw "Jesus," he fell at His feet, and besought Him greatly, saying, "My little daughter lieth at the point of death; I pray Thee, come and lay Thy Hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live." Observe the words, "she lieth at the point of death;" so near to it, that it is not to be thought that I shall see her again alive, yet even from death itself, Thou canst restore her, "I pray Thee come!" Observe again the manner in which Jairus hopes that his child will be restored; "*Lay Thy Hands* on her, and she shall live." It was the touch of the Hand of our Blessed Lord which was to work this wonder.

The prayer of the father was not in vain. "Jesus arose, and followed him." "And

when He came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, He said unto them, 'Give place ; for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.' " There is no need for hopeless and bitter lamentation here; the child is not utterly perished. "And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead." To their eyes, she was indeed lost beyond all remedy. Nothing that man could do would bring life into her ; therefore they mocked at Him Who told them that she was only asleep, as if they did not know what death was. But "He put them all out, and went in."

What a strange and mysterious sight must that have been for the few witnesses whom He had chosen, the father and the mother of the damsel, and the three disciples, St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, whom He had thus made partakers with Him in the miracle ! There, in that still, quiet chamber, where all sounds of weeping and lamentation were now hushed, the Lord Jesus stood over the corpse of this young girl. Face to face were met together, Life and death, God by whom all things were made, and the works of His Hands ruined and defaced. As the Eye of the Saviour fell with love and pity on that pale face and stiffened form that lay stretched

out before Him, He was gazing on the outward sign of that sad punishment which man had brought upon himself by his disobedience. That dead child was the victim of sin; and He was the Redeemer Who had come to set the world free from the misery, and decay, and corruption, which were the fruits of sin. His Own human nature, joined as it was to the Divine Nature, was pure, spotless, and full of virtue. Her nature was struck by that fatal blight with which the fall of man had cursed it. In Him was life, the very fountain head, and well-spring of life, for He was that "second Adam Who is a quickening Spirit," able to give life to "whom He will;" and so He stood over that dead child, took her by the hand, and the maid arose. He touched her, and in that touch the power of God and the weakness of mortal nature met together, and the weakness was turned into new-born strength. In that touch, the chains with which guilt had bound her dropped from her, as bands of tow shrivel before a consuming fire. In that touch, life poured into her; and death, with its corrupting power, was driven forth.

Now what does this show us? That there was no suffering, not even the very worst, from which our Lord had not power to de-

liver. And further, when we find Him working so many of His miracles in one uniform way, when He *touches* the blind, and they receive their sight, when He *touches* the deaf, and their ears are opened, *touches* the dumb, and the string of his tongue is loosed, *touches* the leper, and the foulness of his disease is cleansed away, *touches* the dead, and life comes back,—what would He teach us? That it is through His Human nature, through that nature which He shares with us, that the Power of His Godhead works to heal and restore. It is through His sacred Body, that the virtue of God manifest in the flesh goes forth to cure those evils which sin has brought upon us.

But may we go no further? Surely we may. All the great teachers of the Catholic Church have taken the sicknesses of the body to be types of the sicknesses of the soul, and the death of the body to be a type of the death of the soul; and in this they have only followed the teaching of Holy Scripture itself. Therefore we gather from this miracle that our Lord can not only “open our eyes to see the wondrous things of His law,” “unstop our ears that we may hear the voice of God and follow Him,” “make us a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within

us," when our "whole head is sick, and our whole heart faint," but that even when we are "dead in trespasses and sins," He can quicken, or give us new life. Even when we are most lost, there is a means of restoration open to us. Even when death has seized upon our soul, if we can be brought under the shadow of His sacred Hand, we may live again.

But how can that be? Our Lord is gone up on high. He has entered into heaven. He is no more to be seen amongst us. True; but think of those gracious promises He made to us before He was taken out of our sight. Remember what He said to His Apostles after He was risen from the dead. "Then said Jesus to them, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, *even so* send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." As the Son of man, the Lord Jesus, hath power on earth to forgive sins. Whilst He was on earth, He exercised that power in His Own person: before He ascended into heaven, He appointed the Apostles and all priests of the Church who should come after them to

exercise the same power in His Name. Thus we find St. Paul exercising this office of binding men and loosing men from their sins, though he was not one of those twelve apostles to whom the power was first committed. In the first epistle to the Corinthians he excommunicates the man who was guilty of incest. In the second epistle, he absolves him on his repentance, and declares that he does this in the Name of our Lord, and as His minister: "If I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the *Person* of Christ."

Here, then, is a most blessed means of restoration and life left for those who are dead in sin. The comfort of Absolution has been specially provided for them by the Saviour. It is thus that the Gospel is an answer to the Collect for this week. In the latter we pray, "O Lord, we beseech Thee, absolve Thy people from their offences; that, through Thy bountiful goodness, we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins, which, by our frailty, we have committed." We know well that in the midst of this evil and seducing world, we have offended Thee again and again. Far from living as if we were devoted to Thy service, through our weakness and folly, we have given ourselves over

to the service of sin; and now it holds us as with the grasp of death. But we beseech Thee, absolve, loose us! Yes; the Gospel says: "There is One Who can restore you: go to the ministers of Christ: go to them and you shall go to Him, for He is with them alway, even to the end of the world: go and confess your sins: go and mourn over the offences that have separated you from God, and Christ shall lay His Hands upon you, and you shall live. As the voice of the servant looses you and declares that your sins are forgiven, the Master Himself will loose and forgive you in heaven.

We will conclude with two points, which I ask you earnestly to consider. First, do you ever confess your sins to a priest, and seek absolution for them? I put the question thus plainly to you, because it is one which you ought to answer plainly for the good of your own soul. Private confession to a priest is not absolutely necessary for forgiveness. Certainly it is not, but is it necessary, or, to say the least, adviseable for *you*? There is no doubt that private confession and absolution is an ordinance specially appointed for relieving the conscience that is burdened with the sense of any sin which it cannot otherwise remove. Can you, and ought you to deprive

yourself of it? You feel and acknowledge that the world has an evil influence over you. You find, to your grief, that your heart has been much drawn away from God. You know that many sins have entered into your soul to cut it off from God. If you be cut off finally from God, then all hope is gone. You wish to be at peace with Him. Well! open the Gospels, and you find that our Lord has given authority to His ministers to absolve those who are penitent. Open the Prayer-Book, and you find it inviting you to come to some minister of God's Word* and open your grief, (tell him, that is to say, what you are distressed to remember that you have done against God,) that you may receive abso-

*The Church does not bind you to go to any particular minister for confession, not even to the Priest of your parish, but leaves you to choose for yourself such an one as you feel will best be able to minister to your soul. The words of the Priest, in instructing his parishioners how to prepare for the Holy Communion, are these: "And because it is requisite that no man should come to the Holy Communion but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience; therefore, if there be any of you who, by this means (self-examination and confession to God alone,) cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, *or to some other discreet and learned minister of God's Word*, and open his grief; that, by the ministry of God's holy word, he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness."

lution. Open almost any of the books written on the subject of repentance by the great writers of the English Church, and you find that they speak of Confession and Absolution as a chief means of reconciliation to God. Perhaps you have had friends who have also recommended the practice to you. You have heard it pressed upon you in sermons. You have known those who have manifestly found strength and comfort in this ordinance. With all these voices beckoning you, as it were, to make sure of your repentance and of God's forgiveness, what have you done? No doubt, if by the means pointed out to you in the Prayer-Book you can quiet your own conscience, there is no sort of reason why you should confess your sins to any human creature; but the question you must ask yourselves is, *can you?* You must be your own judges in this, but you must judge honestly.*

* Since the abuse of confession in the Church of Rome has led to the disuse of it in England, it is necessary that we bear in mind the essential difference in the doctrine of the two Churches respecting this ordinance. In the one case it is a duty to which men are compelled, in the other it is a privilege to which they are invited; in the one case it is a recapitulation of all remembered sins, in the other a statement of those particular sins from which we cannot otherwise obtain relief; in the one it is the daily food of the believer, in the other the cordial to be used for the restoring to health of souls diseased with sin. At the same time it must be borne in mind

Perhaps you have never sought for absolution, because you were afraid of the shame of confession, you could not bear the thought of telling out your sins within the hearing of man. But surely it is far better to acknowledge your own sins now with a willing shame and sorrow, and to hear the blessed sentence of God's forgiveness, than to have them made known before men and angels in the last day, and to be put to everlasting shame. *Now* shame is full of hope and healing for the soul, *then* it will be hopeless and full of confusion. Remember the woman that was a sinner. She did not care to hide her past shame nor her present misery from the eyes of men. They might mock her, or judge her harshly: that did not keep her back. She came in before

that, since the cessation of public penance and absolution, there is almost no discipline exercised in the Church, (a fact which is acknowledged and deplored in our Communion Service,) and therefore there is great danger of our receiving the Body and Blood of Christ into souls that have not been fitly prepared by penitence for that Great Gift. It is for each one of us to consider whether he can take upon himself to say that he does "*truly* repent of his former sins," or whether it is not safer for him to make use of private confession and absolution, as part of the ministry of reconciliation, in making his peace with God. For a fuller account of this difference, and of the use of Confession as enjoined by the English Church, see Confirmation and First Communion, by the Rev. Henry Newland, (Masters,) pp. 140, 148, 389.

them all, and lay down at the Feet of Jesus, and washed Them with her tears, till He told her that her sins were forgiven, and bade her go in peace. Be you like her in your humiliation, that you may be like her in the full and free forgiveness which was granted her. In your confession, keep before you the desire to be at peace with God. Be glad of anything that may help to humble and abase you more entirely, that may make you blush and burn with confusion at what you have done, that may urge you with the greater horror to cast away your sins, that your soul may be free for the grace of pardon to flow in and give you life again through union with God. None can know, till they have tried it, how a perfect and penitent confession changes the whole state of the soul towards God ; nor what a weight and burden absolution, after such a confession, removes ; how strong our faith in the blessed power of the Cross to take away sins becomes ; how the love of God seems to beam upon us, and the clouds that were between us and Him to be drifted away ; how doubt, and fear, and despondency is at an end, and we are ready for a calm, and confiding, and loving service of God. The change is no less than if the Lord had laid His Hands upon us and brought us from death to life.

And this brings me to the second point which should be considered. Absolution is not an end, but a means. We come, burthened with sin, to lay down our burthen at the Saviour's Feet, that we may be set free to run the race that is set before us. We come for peace and forgiveness, that we may be ready to do the work of God.* The Hand of Christ is laid upon our dead soul to give it life, and that life is to be used in serving Him. It is a very common, but a very great and serious mistake, to look upon forgiveness as the completion of our salvation. Forgiveness and reconciliation with God is rather the starting point of the Christian course, as in the case of that first full and entire remission of our sin in Holy Baptism, or it is the motive for starting with renewed energy, as in the case of Absolution. Having been forgiven, we thrill in our inmost souls with love for God Who has received us into His favour, with love for Christ Who has reconciled us by His Precious Death to God; and therefore we long to serve God and rejoice in pleasing Him. We are not to seek for peace with God, merely

* This is expressed very exactly in the Collect for the twenty-first Sunday after Trinity: "Grant, we beseech Thee, merciful Lord, to Thy faithful people *pardon and peace*, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and *serve Thee with a quiet mind*, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

that we may rest in it as a pleasing and soothing state of mind. We are not to crave for an assurance of God's having pardoned us merely that we may fold our hands, as if, having once received *that*, we had got all we wished for, and were very glad to have escaped from all spiritual toil, and strife, and trial. It is a deadly deceit of the evil one thus to turn one of God's greatest gifts into a snare by which he draws us away from God's service. Yet this deceit is at the root of many of the false systems of religion, and is the cause of many perversions from the truth which we see about us. We hear much on all sides of the perfect peace of mind that is to be found in this sect or in that. Enquire a little into the circumstances, and you will discover that the particular sect assures its members of salvation without the continual effort to resist sin, or to choose between right and wrong, between the faith and error, which is indeed a sore trial to us, but is nevertheless the proof of our love to God. There is a kind of hankering desire in men's hearts for ease; just such a feeling as was once expressed to me in plain and homely words thus: "It would be such a comfort to feel that one had *done enough*."

My brethren, that is the last feeling that a Christian man ought to allow to rest in his

heart. We never can have done enough for God, enough to show our love for Him Who spared us when we had rebelled against Him, came to seek us when we were lost, died to redeem us, took upon Himself the punishment of our offences, purchased forgiveness for us by shedding His Own Blood. Every day, every moment of our life spent in labouring to do His Will, every power of our soul and body employed in work for Him, would be nothing to repay Him for His priceless mercies to us. The man who has a real and deep sense of God's goodness in pardoning him will say, "How can I ever do enough to show my thankfulness to God? For Christ's sake He has accepted and taken me again into His love and favour, now then let me 'yield' myself 'unto' Him, as one that is 'alive from the dead.' Poor and unworthy as my best efforts to serve Him are, it is a joy and comfort to me to know that He will watch them with favour. I will set myself to make Him all the return in my power for His unspeakable goodness."

And this is exactly the state of heart and life which St. Paul prays in the Epistle for to-day that God would grant to the Colossian Christians. He reminds them that God "the Father" hath made "them" meet to be parta-

kers of the inheritance of the saints in light." He "hath delivered" "them from the power of darkness, and hath translated them into the Kingdom of His dear Son: in Whom we have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins." What then? Their sins forgiven, themselves admitted into the blessed and holy family of God's saints, the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven opened to them—is there nothing more for them to seek and desire? Far from it: the Apostle prays without ceasing that they may "be filled with the knowledge of the will of God in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;" that "they may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness." Can there be any doubt that such ought to be the effect of the pardoning love of God upon ourselves? Every fresh absolution, being, as it is, a fresh application of that atoning Blood which was poured out so freely for us on the Cross, ought to waken us to warmer love and thankfulness for Him Who suffered for us, and for Him Who gave His only Son to be the propitiation for our sins. To walk "worthy of the Lord unto all

pleasing;" to show by our lives that we never forget the deep and wondrous compassion of our Lord; to watch for the least thing in which we may give proof of our love and please Him, whether by abounding in good works, or by patiently and even joyfully bearing our Cross of trouble and suffering as He once bore His—this should be our aim. As every touch of His absolving Hand pours fresh life into our soul, and drives out the deadliness of sin, we should use the life He gives in ministering to Him. Thus our resurrection from sin to holiness will be a witness to the world of the Saviour's mercy and power. "The fame thereof will go abroad into all the land," and the unbelieving will be converted unto Him.

LAST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE REWARD.

Jeremiah, xxiii. 5, 6.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His Name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

ADVENT is again close at hand. Another year with all its holy seasons has passed over our heads. The last sand in its glass is almost run out. Let us begin this day at once by thinking what use we have made of the time that is now gone from us. Have we drawn nearer to God? Have we sought His grace, and turned it to good account? Have we left off old sins, and begun to obey God in a more hearty, loving, steadfast, and unwavering manner? If there is any day in the whole

year in which it is right and proper for us to consider what answer we can give to such questions, it is this day. For now we stand, as it were, on the brink of Judgment. The past year, with all its frequent and abundant offers of grace, with all its sacred and solemn lessons, with all its opportunities for serving God, is a kind of picture of our life upon earth. How has God surrounded us with voices of warning! How has He whispered His encouragements to our inmost souls in the softest tones of mercy! What proofs of His Love has He given us! What rich gifts has He held out to us! What glorious hopes has He spread before us! At Christmas we learnt the deep love of God the Son Who was made man for us, and were led to take notice of His bright and spotless innocence. At Circumcision we heard of Him obeying the law for us even in suffering. At Epiphany we watched Him fulfilling every holy duty of life, manifesting forth the Godhead in the perfection of His human nature. We were told that we, too, were "partakers of the Divine nature" through our union with Christ, and ought to show forth the indwelling of Christ by the purity of our lives. Then the Church at Septuagesima broke in upon us with a sudden and startling call, to think whether or

not we had fallen from this high state of grace, and, if we had, to repent. All through Lent she taught us the duty and the blessedness of repentance. At Passion-tide she led us to the Foot of the Cross, showed us Jesus Christ our God dying in the flesh to atone for us, bid us reflect on the greatness of our sins that nailed Him there, tried to pierce our hearts with sorrow and with love for Him Who laid down His Life for us, and comforted us by declaring to us the power of that Precious Blood to cleanse us. At Easter-tide she sought to fill us with joy in the triumph of our Lord, Who rose from His grave, conquered death, and sin, and Satan for us, and "brought life and immortality to light." On Ascension-day we saw how our Lord, both God and man, went up into heaven, and passed into the Presence of the Father to plead His Sacrifice there, and pray for us, and to open a way for us into that same glory in which He dwells. At Whitsuntide we were still further strengthened by being reminded how the Blessed Comforter, God the Holy Ghost, has come down upon the Church to unite it to Christ, to take of the life that is in our Lord, and give it to the members of His Body. On Trinity Sunday the nature of the Three Divine Persons in One Godhead, was revealed to us as far as

our weakness can bear such a revelation, and the very glimpse which we were allowed to catch of the outskirts of that tremendous Majesty, was a pledge to us of the Will of God to bring us to a clearer knowledge and vision of Himself.

Then we were sent forth into the world to bear witness to God. We were to show our sense of His boundless Love and Goodness by behaving lovingly ourselves to those around us, by works of mercy, by fervent acts of adoration. The holiness of our lives was to force men to believe and confess that God is in us of a truth, that nothing but a power above the power of man could so transform the heart as to make it the source of such godliness. They were to be made to see by our faithfulness in business, by our use of worldly goods, by our gentleness of behaviour, by the purity of our words and acts, that we are ruled by laws far higher than the world can make, that we are seeking a home far purer than this fallen earth, that we are the servants of a King Whose service is Divine. In short, our work in the world was to bring men to taste for themselves of the Love of God Incarnate suffering and atoning for man, subduing and conquering all the evil that afflicts man, of God dwelling in His Church, of God giving the strength and

holiness that is in Himself to man, of God reconciling man to Himself, and raising him to that perfect happiness which consists in being one with Himself.

This was our mission, that which God gave us to do for Him. How is it being done? Is it being done at all? Has the history of all His acts of love and wonderful blessings been wasted upon us up to this hour? Then at least let us rouse ourselves now. For He Himself is coming to take account with us. What if this were our last hour? What if at this moment we stood before Him? What if after this year, which is now closing, there were no more years to run? If we had now said our last prayer; if we could never more fall down on our knees and cry, "forgive us, Lord!" no not even once more; if the opportunity for beginning to serve God better were altogether fled; if our souls were to be for ever and for ever what we feel them to be now; no more teaching, no more calls to repent, no more pleading of God with us, no more drawing near to God, no more cleansing through the Sacrifice of Christ, no more changing and converting of our hearts through His grace; if this were so, how should we meet the Eye of our Judge? Would it be with hope or trembling? with humble faith, as

in One Who knows our weakness, but knows also our earnest love, or would it be with terrible confusion and shame? What account have we to render up for the Gospel believed or despised, for sacraments used or abused, for advance in holiness or falling back into sin, for diligence or sloth, for good works done or left undone? Answer these questions to God in your own minds, my brethren, for it will depend very much on the kind of answer that you are able to make, whether you are prepared to take your part in the services of this day.

It is remarkable that the Church's view of the coming of our Blessed Lord is not terrible, but full of comfort. She does not speak to us to-day of the awfulness of Judgment. She scarcely mentions Judgment at all. She rather teaches us to look on to the last day as one that will complete and crown all our blessings. She describes our Lord not so much in the character of the all-searching Judge, as in that of the Redeemer returning and showing Himself to His expectant people to accomplish His work of mercy. The Church treats us, in fact, as her faithful and obedient children who have acted upon her lessons for the past year, who have been true to her Lord, and are, therefore, watchful and longing for the end of all things.

All the more reason is there that we should try our own hearts well, lest we presume to claim the blessings which are prepared for those that love God, and find ourselves rejected, because He sees that we have neither faith nor love in us. But if we can answer for the earnestness of our desire to be true to our Lord, then the services of this day are most cheering and full of hope.

Look at the Epistle: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." Now what does this mean? It has two meanings. It refers both to the first and to the second Advent of our Lord. It comforts the Jews by telling them that the time of their sorrows and sufferings in captivity should pass away, and the days should come in which they should once more be safe from their enemies. Out of the royal house of David, now brought so low, so decayed, that it was but as a dry root in the ground, there should spring a fresh Branch, even the Messiah. He should reign over the true Israel, His Church, and should protect, guard, and keep them from harm. He should gather His people together, and unite them once more; and so glorious and blessed would

this deliverance be, that compared with it the coming out of the bondage of Egypt would be as nothing. We know that this prophecy has already had one fulfilment, when the Son of God was made man, when He suffered, died, rose and conquered Satan, led captivity captive, gathered into one the people of God that were scattered abroad, and became the Head of His Church, our Strength and Refuge under all trial, temptation, and danger. But was that its last and complete fulfilment? Assuredly not. The Israel of God is not yet in perfect safety. Our enemies still surround us. We have still a battle to fight. Our "own land" is not reached yet. "We see not yet all things put under" our Great King and Lord. We are still looking forward to a blessed time of more unbroken peace and rest than this present world has ever seen; a time which will begin with that second great Advent of our Lord to which the Church now bids us look on. Then, indeed, when Christ returns from heaven, there will be an end of all suffering and sorrow for the redeemed. For them all trial, and temptation, and danger, will be for ever past away. Then at last the glowing words of prophecy will come true. "Violence shall no more be heard within thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy

borders." "It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His Hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left." "He shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." And in that home to which He shall bring them, they shall be secure from all harm, for no one "shall hurt nor destroy in all" His "holy mountain." "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." "The branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low." "And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things." "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth." "The sun shall no more be" their "light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto" them: "but the Lord shall be unto" them "an everlasting light, and" their "God" their "glory." "The days of" their "mourning shall be ended." "The people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of"

the "planting of" the Lord, "the work of" His "Hands, that" He "may be glorified." For He shall "create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." "And it shall be said in that day, 'Lo! this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.'"

What must that time be which holy souls will welcome with such intense joy? What but that day on which He shall come openly and visibly Who is even now the stay of our hearts, that day on which our "eyes shall at last see the King in His Beauty." What must that place be in which is such perfect peace, such spotless innocence, such purity, and such universal love? It can only be that "new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." For there indeed every bad passion shall be subdued to the Will of God, every weakness shall be removed by the power of His grace; there the soul shall be guarded from every temptation, and shielded from all trouble; there every faculty of our whole being shall be taken up with the service of God, and we ourselves filled with an unfailing strength to do the Will of Him on

Whom all our affections shall be immoveably fixed.

It is to this most blessed end of all things that the Church would have us look. All the year long she has taught us of our fall, and of the redemption which Christ has wrought for us. She has told us of the sin that is in us, and of the deep love of Him Who came in the flesh and died to deliver us from that sin. She has set before us, on the one hand, the hard strife we have to keep up against evil, the dangers that are round us, the afflictions that must be borne; and, on the other, the rich gifts of grace we have received, and the mighty aid that is ready for us, (no less than Christ dwelling in us, feeding us with Himself, and pouring life into us.) And now she says, See what is to come after all. "The end of your faith" is, that you may receive the salvation of your souls. After all griefs and troubles, after all tears of repentance and earnest cries for grace, after struggling and falling, struggling and rising again, at last the victory, and the crown, and the rest, and the glory, shall be yours. Through the Blood which Christ shed for you, you shall be cleansed from the sins over which you are now mourning. Through His strength working in you, you shall be set free from all

the weakness and imperfection that now cleaves to you. The gates of heaven shall open before you, and you shall enter into an eternity of happiness. "Behold! the days come," when our Lord and "King shall reign and prosper." His Kingdom shall have come in perfect glory, and there shall no more be anything in us to gainsay or oppose Him. "He shall execute judgment and justice in the earth:" He shall cast "out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." He shall trample under His Feet our great enemy Satan, and rid us of his oppression. "In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely:" all His faithful Church shall be secure under His defence from the fear of harm. "And this is His Name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness." In the praises that they sing before His Throne, in the secret but intense thankfulness that shall stir their inmost being, all the whole company of the redeemed will rejoice to confess that He, and He only, has made them what they are; that to Him they owe the pardon of their sins, their new birth, the change by which they passed from strength to strength, until at last they were made pure and fit for the vision of God. "Behold, the days come that they

shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but the Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them." The days come when the faithful shall praise God, not so much for those first proofs of His love which He gave in separating them from the evil world, (of which Egypt is a type,) and delivering them from the bondage to Satan, (of whom Pharaoh is a type,) but rather for gathering them safely into one common home. "And they shall dwell in their own land:" they shall no more be passing on as pilgrims through the wilderness of this life, suffering under its hardships, and sometimes half fearing lest they should faint and fail. No; they shall at last be settled for ever in that glorious City which is "their own," because it was bought for them by the precious sacrifice of Christ, the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for" those "who are kept by the Power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time."

Such is the teaching of the Epistle, and the Gospel carries it on. There we have the history of the feeding the five thousand.

"A great company comes unto" our Lord. They are hungry. He makes them sit down, and feeds them. They are "filled," yet there is still food "over and above," after they "had eaten." "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world."

We have here in a parable that last great "eating of bread in the Kingdom of God," the filling of those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the perfect satisfaction of the soul that feeds for evermore on Christ. The multitude of the saints follows our Blessed Lord through the wilderness of this world. They turn aside for nothing. They will have no food but what He gives them. For *that* they long and wait. At the last He bids them sit down, for He only can give them rest. He fills them, for He and He alone can meet, and answer, and supply every want of man's spirit. "In" His "Presence is the *fulness* of joy." He feeds them, but there is still more food before them: for the joys that Christ gives never waste. They are ever fresh and ever new. "At" His "Right Hand there are pleasures for evermore." And as they find that He can give them all and more than all they ever longed for, with one voice

they magnify His miracles of love and say, "This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world." This is that Saviour for whom the whole world has waited and yearned. This is He Who has taken pity on our miseries and lightened them. This is He Who has seen the sorrows and burthens under which we groaned, and delivered us from them. This is He Who made our hearts, and knows what alone will satisfy them. This is He Who alone can set right the evil, the false-ness, the sin that has marred and corrupted the earth. We have sought for peace with God; Christ alone can give it through His great atonement. We have striven to be holy; Christ alone can make us so by uniting us to Himself. He "is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world."

A moment's thought will show you how the teaching of this Sunday follows upon that of the previous Sundays. On the twenty-third we learnt that our conversation is in heaven, that even now on earth we belong to heaven, and are to live as subjects of our heavenly King. To-day we are reminded that at last we shall reach that land which is our true home.

On the twenty-fourth we were warned to seek forgiveness of those many sins which

threaten to make us unfit for the purity of heaven. To-day we are comforted with a description of the peace of those who shall be forgiven and accepted by God at last, never to fall away again.

And now, my brethren, see how fit a close is thus furnished us to the services of the year. The Church would say to us, Do not be cast down at present trouble, the days come in which they that mourn shall be comforted. Do not faint and fail at the temptations that try you for the present; bear up bravely; they will not last long; cast your eyes onward, the days come when God's people "shall dwell safely." "Look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." If "now for a season ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:" this is so, "that the trial of your faith," much more precious "than gold that perisheth when tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Do not let yourselves be drawn away from God by the things of this world. They never can make you really happy. At

the most you can enjoy them only for a few short years. A little while, and money, or lands, or houses, or fine clothes, or gay companions, or meat and drink, will be no good to you. You will die, you will be judged. The earth will pass away. In that hour God's love will be the only thing worth having. To love God, to be loved by Him, will fill you with happiness. Nothing else can. Seek this, then, now, and let nothing turn you from it.

See, again, how the Church begins and ends with Christ. All through her course she has set our Lord before us. He was to be our example: He, our strength. For His sake we were to look for forgiveness. By Him we were to be kept in this world: through Him prepared for glory. And now to find Him at last is held out to us as our greatest happiness. To dwell where Christ is, to be with Him, safe under His Protection, kept for evermore from all that may hurt us because we are in Him Whom evil cannot approach, to see Him, to be able to love Him—this we are to long for as the highest of all joys, beyond which there is nothing for us to ask.

Thus the Church leaves us standing, as it were, on the brink of eternity. Eternity!

what a word to utter! How hard to grasp its meaning! To be always holy, always with God, always happy; or to be always wicked, always cast out, always miserable and damned—always in heaven, or always in hell—with no change for evermore. This is eternity. Intense and never-ending bliss: intense and never-ending woe: one of these will be our lot. Pause and think which will be yours. Call up before your mind the scene of the last coming of our Lord. The sun is darkened. The moon does not give her light. The stars of heaven are shaken. The fearful trumpet sounds, and the voice of the Archangel summons the dead to judgment. The heavens open, and the Cross, the sign of the Son of Man, burns in the skies, the hope of the faithful, but the terror of the wicked who have despised it. There on the throne, with thousands of angels round Him, the Judge is seated. He turns to the wicked on His left Hand, and declares their terrible sentence: “Behold My Side which was pierced for you, My Hands and My Feet which were nailed to the Cross for you; these bear witness how I longed, in My love, to save you. I called you, but you would not listen. I sought you, but you fled from Me. I offered you a place in My glory, but you despised it. I

threatened you with the torments of hell, but you mocked at them. You have turned a deaf ear to My Voice pleading with you; you have quenched My Spirit within you; you have rejected the grace offered you, neglected My holy Sacraments, abused My patience and tender pity. You have chosen Satan for your master, and given your hearts to him. Therefore you must follow him to his punishment. 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

He turns to the faithful on His Right Hand, and welcomes them with these words of mercy, "'Come, ye blessed children of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Come you that have been true and constant in My service, follow Me into My glory and bliss, as you have always followed Me in My humiliation and suffering."

In that awful moment, which will be our lot? Shall we be among the blessed or the cursed? Let us pray heartily to God to "stir up" our "wills," to move and urge our hearts to desire and love His service. Let us beg of Him so to fill us with His grace, that we may "plenteously bring forth the fruit of good works." Then shall we be "plenteously rewarded," not according to our merits, which

are far below any reward, but according to the riches of God's mercy, Who is pleased to reward our labours for Christ's sake. Most plenteous indeed is that reward. It is no less than the entire healing of our body and soul, and the gift of every possible happiness that we can imagine or desire. For at the last coming of our Lord the bodies of the faithful will be raised from their graves to be fashioned like unto His glorious Body, to be set free from every weakness and every form of suffering that now afflicts them, to be made deathless, and to be clothed with a Divine strength and eternal beauty. At the same hour the souls of the faithful will be finally purged from all taint of evil and sin, and filled with the most perfect holiness, with an unfailing power of serving, obeying, and delighting in God, without wavering and without distraction. And then this pure and holy family of God shall be gathered together; those that have been torn asunder by death on earth, meeting again never to be parted any more; widowed and orphaned hearts finding at last those after whom they have longed in weary seasons of bereavement; the great fellowship of the saints, from the penitent once so nearly lost and so hardly found, up to Confessors, and Martyrs, and Evangelists, and Apostles, and

the Blessed Mother of our Lord, all united visibly, and rejoicing in each other's joy. Most wondrous happiness! Inexpressible and soothing peace.

Yet even this is not the true reward of the soul. God says, "I am thy exceeding great reward." To see God, and to be with Him, to know Him, to love Him, and to be loved by Him for evermore—this is that plenteous and crowning gift of God which shall satisfy the soul. After all the storms and sorrows of life, after all its dangers and temptations, after fears and failings, after earnest seeking and longing for God, after blind wanderings and penitent returns, to be brought home to God, to be in His very Presence, to be sure that He is ours and we are His for evermore—this is the highest bliss we can receive. To behold the Face of Christ in glory, to have found that Lord Who died for us, and has loved and shielded and cared for us all our days on earth; to be in Him, to be certain that we shall never fall away from Him, but through the power of His continual grace shall serve God perfectly for ever—this is that reward whose plenteousness neither words of man can describe, nor thought of man conceive. This is that reward which the Church in her last

solemn prayer bids us seek as the end of our being. For this we were born, for this redeemed. This is the one thing for which we should long, pray, strive, labour—to love God, be loved by God, and dwell in God for ever. May He of mercy grant we lose not this!

“Behold, the days come!” Yes! He says Himself, “Behold! I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” May we be able to answer, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! Amen.”

RUBRIC.—If there be any more Sundays before Advent Sunday, the service of some of those Sundays that were omitted after the Epiphany shall be taken in, to supply so many as are here wanting. And if there be fewer, the overplus may be omitted, provided that this last Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, shall always be used upon the Sunday before Advent.

This rubric is founded on the doctrine of Christ's continual presence in His Church. The general rule, that every season of the Church is a preparation for that which follows it, holds good with this last season of the year just as much as it does with any of the others; and in the same manner as Advent is the preparation for Christmas, or Lent for Easter, so the last Sundays after Trinity, beginning at the twenty-third, are a preparation for Advent, so far as that word implies the second and final coming of the Lord. The services for the twenty-third, twenty-fourth, and last Sundays after Trinity, all alike refer to this—the two former indirectly, the last directly and immediately.

But, as our Lord is always and at all times present in His Church, this Second Advent is a manifestation rather than a coming. It is not the arrival of one now absent, but the visible revelation of one now and always invisibly present.

But this is the doctrine of the Epiphany or Manifestation of Christ; and therefore it is that whenever there is an additional Sunday after Trinity, there is no service specially provided for it; but we are referred to the Epiphany, and are thereby bid to remember that He whom we shall hereafter see face to face, is present with us in every act we perform as members of His Church.

PROPER LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

1 Cor. ii. 6, 7.

“Howbeit we speak of wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.”

THE whole difficulty of this text, and of several other texts on the same subject, lies in the fact that the expressions used in them are technical. They were very well understood at the time when they were written, and by the people to whom they were written, because to them they were familiar terms; but they are not familiar terms to us.

When St. Paul speaks of men being “perfect,” we must not take the word in the sense in which it is used now. St. James uses the same expression, and, as he explains it, his

explanation will do for both instances. His words are, that the Man of God may be "perfect." He evidently does not mean perfectly righteous, perfectly holy, but what the next clause of the sentence explains, "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." To such as these St. Paul imparts "wisdom;" but this also, he tells us himself, means something very different from the worldly acceptance of the term. It is not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world; *that* comes to nought, or, as he says in another place, it is foolishness in the sight of God. His wisdom is different from all this; it is a "mystery," it has always been in the world, it had even been "ordained before the world," and for the purpose of "glory," but it has been hidden from those for whose benefit or glory it had been ordained; and he, Paul, is empowered to reveal it.

It is perfectly impossible for us to enter into the Apostle's meaning fully, unless we consider the character of the men he was addressing. The Greeks were a highly civilized and intellectual people, eager in the pursuit of knowledge and of what they called "wisdom." The pursuit of wisdom was a profession; the teachers of it, those who are here called the "princes of this world," were

styled Philosophers, or Lovers of Wisdom. The object of this "wisdom" was virtue. And this it is which St. Paul pronounces "foolishness in the sight of God;" not that he would say that virtue is foolishness, but that he knew, what they did not, that the object which they had proposed was absolutely beyond the reach of any human efforts.

These Philosophers were divided into "schools," as they were called; each of these schools was under its own leader, Plato, or Epicurus, or Anaxagoras, as the case might be; each had its own theory of the principles of vice and virtue, which it invariably taught as a thing to be attained, though perhaps not without labour, by the natural man. In all these sects alike there was an outer and an inner school—those who were learners merely, and those who had already learnt; and in every one of them there was a "mystery," a special revelation, which those of the outer school were supposed to be not only absolutely incapable of comprehending, but absolutely unworthy to participate in. The object proposed by the master to these members of the outer school was, that they should by their diligence render themselves worthy to partake of this mystery, to the knowledge of which he had himself attained; and the communication of it was to

be their reward. Those who were judged fit to be admitted into the inner school were technically called *τελείοι*, *the perfect*, meaning those whose education had been perfected, or completed.

St. Paul, writing to these people, assumes the character of a Teacher of Philosophy, the Head of a School, as indeed he was; and, using the language to which they were accustomed, he speaks of those to whom the mysteries of Divine revelation were fully disclosed as "the perfect." The revelations themselves he calls "mysteries." And when he would intimate that there are still farther revelations which are not to be declared to us in this world, he says, "Not as though I had already *attained*, either were already *perfect*, but I stretch forward towards the *mark* for the *prize* of my *high calling*." Now every one of these words, "attained," "perfect," "mark," "prize," and "calling," is a technical expression belonging to the phraseology of Greek philosophy.

St. Paul, therefore, writing to Philosophers, tells them:—

1. That the Wisdom they are seeking is Foolishness.

2. That nevertheless there is such a thing as Wisdom.

3. That to him is committed the revelation of it.

That is to say, that the Christian Religion is, in fact, a school of Ethics, a system of Philosophy, in every respect similar to those which they had seen, proposing, like theirs, the pursuit of virtue, the only difference being that it was based on sound principles, which hitherto theirs had not been.

The Book of Proverbs, with which the Church closes her system of teaching, may be considered as a code of Christian Ethics written by the direction, and under the inspiration of God. It is the morality of the Bible arranged in the form of apothegms and precepts. We may regard it as a repetition or summary of all that we have been learning hitherto. We may consider that the Church, having chosen the season between Trinity Sunday and Advent for instructing us in the practical duties of religion—having selected as her Proper Lessons for the Sundays, such portions of Holy Scripture as might best serve to influence our obedience, in order to enforce thereby a due performance of the third part of our baptismal promise—having incited us by commands and precepts, by promises and threatenings, by rewards and punishments, by examples of virtue, and by judgments against

vice, collected from the historical and prophetic writings of the Old Testament, is now laying down in a didactic form the institutes and principles of morality which constitute the Christian Ethics; and for this reason she has chosen the Proper Lessons for the remainder of the Trinity season out of the Proverbs of Solomon.

“This Book contains the most complete system of morals that ever was delivered to man for informing his manners, for regulating his passions, for correcting vice, and for recommending virtue. Its instructions apply equally to every relation and every state of life. With equal authority it directs the king and the subject, the rich and the poor, the parent and the child, the young and the old, in the duties of their respective stations and conditions of life. “For,” as St. Basil says, “it bridles the injurious tongue, corrects the wanton eye, and ties the unjust hand in chains; it persecutes sloth, chastises all irregular desires; it teaches prudence, it raises men’s courage, and recommends temperance and chastity with such efficacy and force, as at once convinces the judgment and engages the affections.”*

* Wogan, Preface to Essay on the Lessons from the Book of Proverbs.

Considering this book as a treatise on Christian Philosophy, it contains one very remarkable peculiarity. The avowed object of all the Greek schools was to recommend virtue; and all their treatises, as many as have come down to us, are full of it. In the Book of Proverbs the word does not occur at all.

This is singular, but the explanation will point out to us how it is that the wisdom of this world is in the sight of God foolishness.

The word "virtue," if we take its meaning from its etymology, must signify the strength of a man, the power of a man, as derived from his own nature, to withstand temptation, to choose what is right and good and just, and to persevere in the course he has chosen. This is virtue, and in this the philosophers placed the highest wisdom. "The highest wisdom," says Seneca, "is, that a man confide in himself, that he be satisfied in himself, and with the good things that spring from himself." This, therefore, is the highest teaching of the heathen schools of Philosophy. And it is precisely of this that Solomon has written, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is more hope of a fool than of him."

The teaching of the world, therefore, and the teaching of revelation, are in direct oppo-

sition upon this point, and naturally so. The world, unenlightened by revelation, is ignorant of the history of the Fall. The qualities which it admires and proposes to itself as the objects of its aim, really are admirable, only they are impossible. The Bible, therefore, never uses a word signifying the innate probity, and justice, and rectitude of man, the strength which springs from himself and his own nature, because God knows, and His inspired writers know, that the quality itself does not now exist. God created man perfect no doubt, and there is just as little doubt that man still retains within himself every element of perfection: as every member of the body which we now possess has its use, so that without it the body cannot be perfect; so every passion and feeling of the mind and soul which we now possess has its use, so that without it the mind and soul would also be incapable of perfection. We must not imagine that the sentence of God deprived us of one single quality which was necessary for the perfection of human nature, or what the heathens called virtue; it removed that SPIRIT OF GOD which regulated them all, and kept each under proper subjection to every other. Original sin is simply the irregular action of lawful and necessary passions and

feelings, and the action is irregular only because man was left to his own guidance instead of being under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This, so far as man was concerned, was gone irrecoverably, yet unless it was restored perfection was impossible. The pursuit of virtue was not reprehensible in any case, neither does St. Paul intend to blame it in the heathen. To them it is, what the pursuit of the Philosopher's stone was to the Alchemists of the middle ages—a thing eminently desirable, a thing the elements of which have a natural and actual existence, but which, nevertheless, is absolutely unattainable by man, because God alone can combine those qualities which must be combined in order to produce it. The wisdom of this world, therefore, the prize, and aim, and object of all these Philosophers, was foolishness in the sight of God, because God sees that they are occupying their whole lives in seeking that which has no possibility.

On the other hand, the whole teaching of the Bible is grounded on the doctrine of Original Sin, the consciousness of man's fall from a state of innocence and favour with God into a state of guilt and condemnation, by which he had incurred not only the penalty of the law, death, but an absolute disability to

recover himself, or to perform any one duty which, as a creature, he owes to his Maker. The philosophy of the world and the philosophy of the Bible are founded upon opposite axioms; the one, that the natural man is capable; the other, that he is incapable of any good thing.

The Sacred Writings, therefore, have nowhere defined the rectitude of our actions by the word "virtue;" * for that would be a contradiction in terms; it would signify a certain power inherent in ourselves, a certain strength in our own nature which we have not. It does not mean that we have no power to do these things which the heathen philosophers propose to themselves and their disciples. St. Paul is very careful to guard against such a notion as this. When he says, that in me dwelleth no good thing, he guards his assertion by his explanation, "that is, in *my nature*," so far as it is innate, so far as I can

* The word virtue, wherever it is used in Scripture, signifies "power," innate power, as, "there is *virtue* gone out of *Me*," in the mouth of our Saviour; or else it is used in the sense of "manliness," as, "add to your faith, *virtue*;" that is, be not satisfied with believing, but have the manliness to confess what you believe before the world. If used in its proper sense, as a heathen would use it in the Bible, it is used hypothetically: "If there be any virtue." If there be any reality in that virtue which you speak about, then exercise it. Except in these senses, the word is never used in the Bible.

do it myself. What he means, and what the Sacred Writings teach throughout, is, that we have lost the power of *originating* good, not that we are unable to do good in virtue of an extraneous power bestowed upon us by One who is the Author of all good things.

We have the power of doing every thing which the heathen philosophers proposed to themselves in the Bible; therefore we have a Christian equivalent to the heathen term virtue, and that word is **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, which is derived from the word **RIGHT-WISE-NESS**, which again is formed from an obsolete word, signifying "to **KNOW**." The "Wise Virgins" means simply the virgins who *knew*, or to whom had been revealed what was right. The *Wise Men* of the East by no means signifies, as is commonly imagined, the learned men of the East, but simply the men who, though living in the East, and beyond the Holy Land, yet *knew* from above what was right for them to do.

Virtue, if it existed, would be innate; but Wisdom, or the Power of Knowledge, is not an inherent quality. The very word implies an Instructor, One who has taught, or caused us to *know*, as the wisdom of the *Wise Men* who followed was consequent on the indication of the Star that led.

A man, therefore, may be wise, because, if enlightened, he may *know*; a man may be righteous, because, if directed, he may go *right*; but he cannot be virtuous, because he cannot be intrinsically good; he may not, therefore, trust *in himself* that he is righteous.

This is the whole principle of the Book of Proverbs, and this is what we must constantly bear in mind in order to understand and appreciate them. They are "the Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, to know wisdom and instruction, and to perceive the words of understanding, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity, to give subtilty to the simple, and to the young man knowledge and discretion;" all of these, you will observe, are acquired qualities. And we are told that the foundation of them all, "the *beginning* of Wisdom, is the Fear of the Lord;" the same quality which in the New Testament is called Faith. This Fear of the Lord is the first commandment of the first table; and our own first apprehension of it is the first commandment of the second: "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother."

There are nine of these chapters selected from the Book of Proverbs. They do not

form anything like a connected series of which a summary can be given, as in the historical, or biographical, or doctrinal chapters of the Bible. They are, for the most part, detached reflections, not doctrinal, strictly speaking, but practical in their character. They are, beyond a doubt, moral precepts, but they differ from those of the heathen schools in this, that they are based on the doctrines of the Bible, taking for their axiom the facts known by revelation only, and which, therefore, were unknown to the heathen philosophers—that human nature is of itself absolutely corrupt, and incapable of virtue—that every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights; and that man's righteousness consists in the right use of that which he has thus received.

This is the principle laid down in the second chapter. The Wisdom which it speaks of we must understand in the sense in which it is used almost invariably in the Bible, as Heavenly Wisdom—the power of making a wise choice sent down to us from God. This it declares to be not ours; that is, not springing from ourselves, but to be sought for earnestly. We are told that if it be sought for it will be found, and will bring with it

“righteousness, and judgment, and equity, yea, every good path;” but that it will not be found at all by those who are either self-willed or envious of those portions of the gift given to others; for that “the froward is an abomination to the Lord, but his *secret* (or *mystery*, to use the technical expression of the schools and of the New Testament,) is with the righteous.

This is the key to the whole system. The “Proverbs,” properly so called, do not begin till the next Sunday; the earlier lessons being a sort of preface, or laying down of the general principles on which all biblical instruction and divine wisdom is to be founded. The Proverbs themselves are simply rules of life and manners couched in the sententious and dogmatic form so common in the East, with no farther connection with each other than that which arises from the aim and object which they all have in common, and from the general doctrine upon which they are all founded; but together “they form a full and complete system of divine ethics. The virtues and vices are, for the most part, set in opposition the one to the other, and compared together, in order that the difference between them, like the lights and shadows of a picture illustrating each other, may be more clearly

seen. Life and death, blessing and cursing, are here set before us as they are in the Book of Deuteronomy; not as there, with the awful solemnity of a judge pronouncing sentence, but under the more engaging character of a parent instructing his children, and that in so persuasive a manner, and in such lively colours, that we may, by the evidence of our own senses, our reason, and our interest, be constrained to choose life, to eschew evil, and to do good."

"Wisdom," says Solomon in one of his Proverbs, "hath builded her house on seven pillars." These seven pillars, which depend on the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Ghost announced by Isaiah, are the Seven Beatitudes preached by our Saviour in the Mount. We call them Humility, Benevolence, Liberality, Chastity, Meekness, Temperance, and Diligence. Under one or other of these seven heads may be classed all the virtues of the Book of Proverbs, and all the duties of man.

But these, after all, are but heathen virtues, such as the Philosophers themselves might hold forth for our imitation.

True. But in God's system of morality there are three Christian graces, Faith, Hope, and Charity, which change these moral virtues

into Christian virtues; and we are bound to believe and confess that there are no virtues in a Christian without these graces. Morality, which is the pure law of nature, might, and doubtless did, save a heathen; but morality alone will not now save us who live under the new law of grace. This consideration, if well attended to, would solve the difficult question respecting faith and works, which are but other names for grace and morals. Moral virtues without grace, though good in themselves, are not good in a Christian. They are the works of natural reason; and, therefore, now that the Christian dispensation is come, they are justly counted to be but dead works. It is by faith in Christ only, and by the grace of His Holy Spirit, that they are animated, and made living works and good works; yea, so far good, that without them faith itself is dead, and of no benefit or effect, but rather like a tree that is dead, and without fruit.

It is true, the religion of nature (as we have seen in the heathen philosophy,) taught both the reasonableness and the practice of moral virtue; and in the heathen it was commendable, because it was agreeable to the light of reason and the law of nature under which they lived. But revealed religion has advanced it

to a much higher degree of clearness and obligation, and distinguishes it by the style of "righteousness," not only as it is performed in obedience to the divine command as well as reason, and, therefore, is doing the thing that is right, but as it is elevated to its highest perfection (and, therefore, done in the right manner) by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, who first infuses, and then works all our works in us; yea, sanctifies all our common actions, and makes them all good and rewardable because they are wrought in God.

"But now that the light of the glorious Gospel has shined into us, whoso trusts to moral virtue exclusive of grace, or to grace and faith only without the concurrence of virtue and good works, he is still in the state of nature; nay, in a much worse state than a Jew or a Gentile, because he is without excuse. Such, therefore, are not entitled to the great and glorious promises of the Gospel, because they reject the means of grace, and of all those salutary helps which it affords and offers to us for making both our persons and our works acceptable to God. In a word, he only who has a true Faith in Christ can have an assured Hope; he only that has the assurance of Hope can have a true Charity or

Love of God. And this Love he has because he knows the true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. And that Christian only who has this Faith, this Hope, this Charity, is now the truly moral man." *

H.

* Wogan.

THE DISCOURAGEMENT OF CHURCH REFORMERS.

1 Kings, xix. 4.

“He came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.”

THIS prayer of Elijah's is not only very natural under the circumstances, but it is also very characteristic of the man; and as it is equally characteristic of any zealous, earnest, energetic, and practical man, who has been raised up, as Elijah was raised up, for the reformation or restoration of God's Church, the lesson of this chapter is a lesson for many of us, who, after our power and our means, are acting in the spirit of Elijah in this our day. Elijah could not help feeling himself to have been raised up and commissioned by God as the reformer of Israel, he could not help see-

ing that a great work had been committed to him. Hitherto he had neither fainted nor shrunk from it, he had watched it patiently for years—years of trial and persecution—confident through them all that through him God's word would come to pass. When the hour for action had arrived, he had not hesitated to expose himself to imminent danger, to stand forth alone before the prophets of Baal, to denounce unshrinkingly the popular worship, and to restore the neglected and forgotten service of the Lord.

And hitherto he had met with most wonderful and unprecedented success; the whole people, late so faithless and perverse, with one accord had seemed to be returning to their allegiance, with one accord they had rejected their false teachers, had fallen on their faces before the Lord's prophet, and with one voice had confessed "the Lord He is the God, the Lord He is the God."

And yet in the very next chapter we find all these professions emptiness, all this reformation brought to nothing, God's miracles of no effect, and the prophet lately so honoured and so triumphant flying for his life.

Is it surprising that he should have cast himself down in despair, and have given up the Lord's cause as lost and hopeless? What

could have been done to convince man more than he had done? and Israel was not convinced. At his word the fountains of Heaven had been shut up, there had been neither dew nor rain these years but according to his word, at his word also they had been opened, he had turned aside God's curse, and had brought down the blessing of fruitfulness upon the land of drought and famine: and in return he had met with hatred and persecution. "I have been very jealous for the Lord of Hosts," he said, "for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, and thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away."

In all this we will not say that there was not some wavering in the Prophet's faith, that there was not some natural frailty, from which the most eminent of God's servants are not more exempt than we are ourselves. It was not selfishness, nor murmuring, nor distrust of God's own power to accomplish His own work, but there was deep disappointment in it. What he distrusted was himself, and his own call to the work; "take away my life," he said, "for I am not better than my fathers. I am no more fitted to carry out this great work than any who have gone before me."

Evidently up to the present time he had been elated at his own success, evidently he had been in danger of falling into the sin of Moses, and speaking unadvisedly with his lips; evidently this reverse had been a great mercy to him individually. But besides His mercy to His servant, whom He had thus delivered from a great spiritual danger, God had sent this reverse for the more confirmation of that very work which His servant had begun to despair of.

Viewing the transaction as a single act, in which light alone the Prophet must have viewed it, the whole of it must have seemed most wonderful, most unaccountable. How is it possible, we say, that a nation could have experienced what Israel had experienced during the drought and the famine, could have seen what Israel had seen on the day of the sacrifice, could have received the relief and the blessing which Israel was just beginning to enjoy, without returning, with their whole heart and their whole energies, to the Lord, who had so signally and so mercifully manifested Himself.

We forget, and Elijah forgot, that the unfaithfulness into which Israel had fallen was not an act of sin, but a habit of sinfulness; it was a chronic disease, such as required a

chronic remedy; that which Israel required was not a conviction of the mind, but a habit of discipline, and therefore *time* was necessary to produce anything that deserved to be called a reformation.

Let us see how it was that God's own people, with God's own law in their hands, had arrived at such a state as made reformation necessary, and to do this, we must look back a century or so in the history of the nation.

It was about a hundred or a hundred and fifty years before the transactions we are describing, that, not without deep and grievous provocation, that people had rebelled against their rightful king, and had dethroned him. A man whom that very king had distinguished and loaded with benefits, had usurped the throne of his benefactor. This usurper was what we should now call a freethinker; belonging to the family of Israel, he had lived long in foreign parts, and there had been in the habit of seeing the Almighty worshipped under that symbol which was the custom of the country. Arriving as he did from Egypt, a foreign land, he naturally enough brought with him the forms of worship which prevailed there, not, probably, that he preferred them, for he seems to have been a man without any

deep feeling of religion, but because he imagined that they would square better with his own political purposes.

For this purpose he sanctioned and countenanced forms of worship which hitherto had been known in God's Israel only to be condemned, he set up places of worship other than those in which it had pleased God to select to place His Name there, and, when he found that the priests of God's succession neither could nor would acknowledge an usurped authority to the prejudice of the royal line, he ejected them, and "made of the lowest of the people priests of the high places; whosoever would he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places."

This man was Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

God for His own wise purposes had permitted his enterprise to prosper, God Himself had interposed, and had prevented the legitimate king from recovering his inheritance. The revolution of Israel was judicial, it was the merited punishment as well of the king as of the people, God, therefore, had stretched forth His hand and made it to prosper: but though the wicked be a sword in His hand by which He executes His judgments, though He educe good from their evil, He

overlooks neither the sin nor the sinner. The usurpation is confirmed, but not without a curse on the successful usurper and innovator—"this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off and destroy it from off the face of the earth." The next generation saw his family extinct, his name put out, and an alien seated on the usurped throne of Israel.

But though his name and his family had been thus put out, it was not so with the consequences of his sin. His style and title was handed down to posterity, and he is known to us and to all ages as Jeroboam the son of Nebat *who made Israel to sin*—as the man who, by the encouragement of a dissenting form of worship for political purposes, had opened a door for any imaginable departure from the word of God, whether in His worship or in His laws.

In the days of Ahab, this sin, which Jeroboam had introduced, had ripened and borne its fruit, and this fruit was not so much the open denial of God, as the general deadness to all religious feelings whatever, which had crept over the nation, that state described by the Prophet as "the halting between two opinions;" it resulted in the neglect, rather than in the violation of God's ordinances, and

in the toleration of forms of worship of man's invention, not so much in the place of, as among those prescribed by the revelation of God. Men had become indifferent; the golden calves, the high places, the groves, or the Lord's Temple, were all alike forms of worship, and were all alike followed indifferently, as men preferred one or the other, they were all alike so many sects or religious persuasions, till, in the time of Ahab, the very idea of God's Church had become so obliterated by the neglect of years, its ordinances so confused, and its doctrines so estranged from the minds of men, that it seemed strange to no one that alliances should be formed with those absolutely beyond its pale, and that a Sidonian unbeliever should share the throne of God's own people.

It is not a matter of surprise that new religious opinions, unknown even to the free-thinking and liberal Jeroboam, should have crept in one by one, and that the worship of Baal and Ashtaroath should have become first naturalized and tolerated, then under the sunshine of court favour, preferred and dominant over the worship of Israel.

Nor need we wonder that the state of public morals had kept pace with the state of public worship, so that not only the sacrile-

gious design of Ahab to appropriate to his own purposes an inheritance in Israel, conveyed no shock to the national mind, but that even the fountain of justice had become polluted, and the judges of Jezreel scrupled not to adapt their judgment so as to conciliate that evil influence, which they imagined had possessed the ear of their sovereign, and which, without his consent, it may be, was acting in his name for the acts of which he was responsible; for though the words might have been the words of Jezabel, the seal which gave them their authority was the seal of Ahab.

This was the condition to which the people of Israel had been reduced at the time when Elijah executed his mission, so that the drought which came upon the land at the Prophet's word was but a type of the drying up of God's grace; the nation had lost, as it were, the stamina of true religion. They were open to conviction from the evidence of their senses, and from the strength of their understanding, but they had no moral strength to work out their conviction to its natural consequences, to repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

On the day of Elijah's Sacrifice, therefore, when they saw the fire come down from Heaven, their understandings were convinced.

For the moment they could not halt between two opinions. The word of God's ambassador seemed irresistible, it flew through the whole people with a rapidity which must have astonished the Prophet himself. "The Lord He is the God," they cried, "the Lord He is the God."

But those who raised this cry had done it without counting the cost, without seeing the consequences which such an admission must entail—the self-will to be given up, the evil habits to be cast aside, the painful duties to be fulfilled. Conversion is not a work of the head, but of the heart. That indifference to God's worship, that deadness to true religion, had been the work of years, it had become traditional, it had been handed on from generation to generation. Was it to be cast aside in a moment? Light had indeed been let in upon a darkened nation, but sudden light dazzles rather than enlightens. To eyes so long unaccustomed to it, it was even painful, and hence, when the first astonishment was over, men began to search out means of escaping the consequences of their own conviction. If the Prophet were right, if God had really spoken in him, then these consequences were inevitable; all their evil habits must be broken through, all their customs and man-

ners contrary to God's word must be given up.

But this required self-denial, such as their long indulged habits of tolerance had rendered most peculiarly difficult. That a notable miracle had been done among them was evident, none could gainsay it. The easiest and readiest way of evading its consequences was to raise a popular clamour against the Prophet, and for this, what they probably called his intolerance towards the priests of Baal, furnished a ready pretext. "God do so to me, and more also," said the Sidonian Jezebel, "if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by this time to-morrow."

This is quite sufficient to account for all that at first sight seems unaccountable in the persecution raised against their benefactor by the people of Israel, and quite sufficient to enable us to enter into the feelings of despair under which he threw himself under the juniper tree, and requested for himself that he might die. We do not deny that it was a weakness, a defect of faith—as such, it was immediately reprov'd by God—but it was natural, and, considering the infirmity of human nature, excusable.

And, therefore, probably it was that in this instance God was pleased to comfort Elijah

by showing what really was the result of that work which he thought had been so utterly fruitless.

But we must remember—and this is the point of my sermon—that no part of this result was to be visible to ordinary observers till he whose words had produced it had been removed from the scene of his labours. He was not to see it, but his work was not lost, the seed had been sown faithfully, and, at the time of his despair, it was but sleeping in the ground; the harvest was yet to come. “Go return on thy way,” said God, “to the wilderness of Damascus, and when thou comest,” prepare the instruments who are to bring it to pass. “Anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel.” But he was not to see it; Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah he was to anoint to be prophet *in his room*. But the reformation which he had set moving should come nevertheless, “him that escapeth from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay, and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.”

This would be hereafter, when Elijah himself had been removed; but even for the present day, do not think that you are left alone; at this very time of your fancied deser-

tion and destitution, at this very time, when you are saying I, even I only, am left, the Lord has left Him seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed down to Baal, and the mouth that has not kissed him.

Now taking this example to ourselves, (and of course it was written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come,) we must consider it as the general law of all reformations whatever in God's Church, and what all must expect who are called to the office of Elijah. Still more plainly shall we see this when we compare Elijah's reformation of Israel with that far greater reformation the founding of Christ's Holy Church here on earth. There is the same sudden and involuntary conviction, the "fear that came on every soul;" the same wonderful and miraculous success, the crowding in of converts, the "adding to the Church daily," the sanguine hope, the faithful joy of the first preachers, "the eating of meat from house to house with gladness and singleness of heart." Then comes the check; the persecution, the discouragement, the peril,—not by the heathen only, that might be expected, that could be borne, but from their own countrymen, nay, by false brethren—"many are offended and betray one another and hate one another;" many

“false prophets arise, and deceive many.” What wonder, then, that the very same effects are produced over again which we see recorded in the case of Elijah? what wonder “because iniquity abounds, the love of many shall wax cold,” and that even the faithful shall faint—not with fear, not from what is coming upon themselves—that they are ready to endure—but from want of success, from what is coming upon the earth? Their energy is chilled, they think God goeth not forth with their armies, that the achievement is not for them, that they are no better than their fathers; whereas the fact is, that it is a mercy to ourselves, as well as to our people, that we do not see the fruit of our labours. This is St. Chrysostom’s interpretation of this invariable law, and it is the true one: “Elias was wonderful,” he said, “but on one occasion he stood convicted of faint-heartedness; Moses was great, but he also fled under the influence of the same passion. Now such things befel them because God stood aloof and permitted their human nature to stand confessed. For if because He led them out of Egypt the people said, ‘Where is Moses?’ what would they not have said if He had also led them into the Promised Land? They would have worshipped *him*, not God. For also St. Paul

himself says, I forbear, lest any should think of me above my desert, and lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, that he may buffet me. What is this," said Chrysostom, whose seat at Constantinople was not so easy but that he could himself have afforded abundant exemplification to his own words, "God will not permit the preaching to progress, in order to check our high thoughts, but permits adversaries to set upon us. By the messenger of Satan he means Alexander the Coppersmith, and the party of Hymenæus and Philetus—all the adversaries of the Word—those who contended with and fought against him, those that cast him into prison, those that beat him and led him away to death, for they did Satan's business. There was given me, he says, a thorn, that it may buffet me, not as if God putteth arms into such men's hands, God forbid! but that He doth not chastise and punish, but for the time permitteth and alloweth them."

But we are not to suppose that our labours are lost because the effects of them are not seen; the seed of Jehu's Reformation was sown on the day of Elijah's sacrifice; the national mind, so long debased, so unused to

the ways of God, required strengthening, and strengthening required time; the strong, visible, palpable indications of God's presence passed away, but they were like the strong wind which rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks *before* the Lord; they had prepared the way for that which was to follow. But the Lord was not *in* the wind, nor was He *in* the earthquake, nor was He *in* the fire; these were His precursors, these had opened the way for His presence; they were not, therefore, lost nor wasted. And thus it is always; the Lord works *by* these things, though He may not work *in* them; they are the precursors of His Presence, though all that they appear to produce is devastation, and desolation, and ruin; it is the still small voice produced by these things working on the memory and the conscience of man that indicates the Presence of the Lord, the actual working of grace, the permanent reformation of God's people. Hence it is that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church; it falls to the ground apparently in vain, God's enemies triumph and take courage, His people are sad and depressed, but it is that very act that has gotten them the victory.

Is this to be the universal law of God's providence whenever He vouchsafes a resto-

ration to His Church? and are we to faint, and be discouraged because we are not exempted from it? Moses led the people out of Egypt, but Joshua reaped the fruit of this deliverance; Elijah proclaimed the God of Israel, but Jehu and Elisha restored His worship; Ezekiel and Daniel banished the idols, but Ezra and Nehemiah rebuilt the city; Paul founded the Churches, but till centuries had passed these were but despised and oppressed assemblies of persecuted Christians. What have we wrought in God's service, that the lot should not fall on us which fell on Moses, and Elias, and Paul, and the Prophets, and the Apostles—nay, on our blessed Lord Himself? They laboured, and others entered into their labours, why should it be otherwise with us? Is it not enough for us that the Lord's work should be committed to our hands, the very same work that was committed to theirs? Are we to be discouraged that the sloth, the indifference, the deadness, the cold palsy, that has been creeping on the Church of England for years and for generations, is not to be removed from the earth and utterly banished by a single race of Church reformers?

Have we not had enough to encourage us? have we not had enough to show that the

hand of God was with us? Compare the state of the Church this day to what it was not twenty years ago; compare the state of this Church, this building in which we are now assembled, with what it was before its restoration, for that will be the aptest type of the Church of England; remember what it was, see what it is—its disfigurement swept away, its services restored. Remember, too, that this is but one of hundreds in the land, from how many of these restored Churches does the voice of prayer and praise ascend daily. Look also at the state of public morals—we will not now compare them with what they ought to be, but with what they were—compare the drunkenness and debauchery of the days of George the Fourth with the morals of these our own days. Have not the people cried out, The Lord He is the God, the Lord He is the God?

And now are we to faint because God has been pleased to give us a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet us, so that the work which some ten years ago seemed to be going on prosperously, and making steady and rapid progress, has come to a check? Elijah might in despair throw himself under his juniper tree, and request for himself that he might die because he was not better than his fathers,

but we are disciples of a greater than Elijah, we neither hope nor wish to fare better than our fathers, nor do we expect the disciple to be above his Master, sufficient for us that we be as our Master. Like St. Paul, we may indeed beseech the Lord thrice, for it is natural to wish for visible and immediate success, and evident and material triumph over those who are sent to buffet us; but when He replies to us, as He did to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, My strength is made perfect in weakness," then, like St. Paul, most gladly will we glory in our infirmities.

"Seest thou," says St. Chrysostom, "a single-minded soul. He longs to be delivered from his adversities, but when he hears God's answer, that it befitteth not, he not only is not sorry that he was disappointed of his prayer, he is even glad, wherefore he says, I take pleasure, I rejoice, I long to be reproached and distressed for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then I am strong."

We cannot see, we cannot estimate the strength that is round us at this very moment. Elijah despaired because of the prophets of the Lord, he, and he only, was left, and at that very time there were seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Is it not so still, is it not so always?

The false prophet, Mahommed, even shall reprove our faint-heartedness—defeated, driven to the mountain, hiding from his enemies in a cave, his confidence remained unshaken. “We must needs yield, O Prophet,” said Abu Bekr; “we are but two against a multitude.” “There is a third with us,” said Mahommed, “even God.” But why seek from heathenism for examples when God’s own word is full of them? When Hazael had surrounded Elisha in Dothan, and the trembling and fearful servant had crept up to him with his “Alas! my master! and what shall we do?” “Lord,” said the Prophet, “open Thou his eyes that he may see.—And the whole mountain was full of horses of fire and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

Is God’s arm shortened now? Is the Lord no longer in the ship? Are the gates of Hell now at last to prevail against His Church, that we cannot be satisfied quietly and patiently to do the Lord’s work in it? Can we not afford to tarry the Lord’s leisure?

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee. He never shall suffer the righteous to be moved. He is on thy right hand, and none shall be ashamed who wait upon Him.”

NOTE.—Among the observations made by various critics on this series of Sermons, there are two which the Editor thinks it advisable to notice. (1) That the Swedish Established Church is spoken of as a Branch of the Church Catholic, and admitted as a witness to the general arrangement of the Seasons; and (2) That in the Church of England, no less than in that of Sweden, the actual arrangement of the Gospels and Epistles is not identical with that of the Church of Rome. The general idea is admitted to be the same, but, for instance, the Gospel of the twenty-third Sunday after Trinity, and, consequently, the lesson it conveys, is to be found in the Roman Church on the twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost, corresponding with our twenty-first Sunday after Trinity—and so with many of the others.

With respect to the first objection, the Editor is by no means anxious here to vindicate the Catholicity of the Church of Sweden; personally, he believes in it, and so does the Bishop of London, who once empowered the Bishop of Gothenborg to confirm catechumens of the English Church, but it is not necessary to prove it. All that is necessary for the Editor's present purpose, is to show that a body of men *professing* to be a true Branch of Christ's Church, does retain in its Liturgy an arrangement of the Christian Seasons similar to that retained by other branches of the Catholic Church.

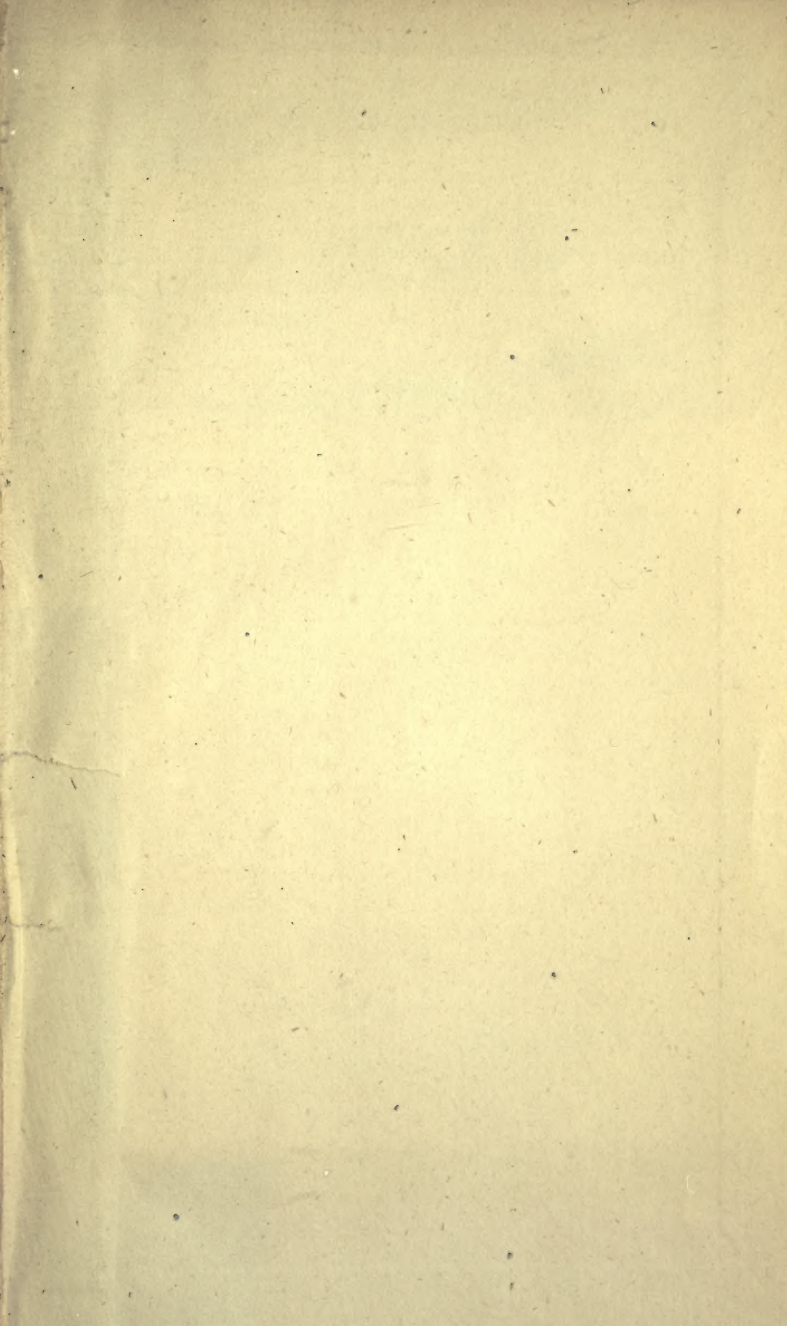
And, with respect to the second objection, he would submit that the fact, that in the several branches of the Catholic Church this arrangement is similar but not identical, is only an additional confirmation to the asserted fact, that there was a clear principle of doctrine involved in it.

Had the arrangement been in all cases absolutely the same, it is evident that the Reformed Churches would simply have copied what they found in existent Liturgies, and that, very possibly, without reflection, merely because they found these passages of Scripture arranged to their hand.

As it is, it is equally evident that these Liturgies have not been adopted without previous examination and sifting, so that when a reformed Liturgy was compiled from those already existing, and a fresh arrangement was found advisable, that fresh arrangement was made upon the very same principle

which had regulated the old one. The dissimilarity, such as it is, proves that it was not a blind copy, and that the Churches of England and Sweden are independent witnesses, while the general agreement proves equally that there was some general principle of doctrine which guided them all.

H.



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